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# Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Multi-Hazard Coordination Task Force Report



An emergency preparedness and response strategy for the Delta region with specific recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature as directed by the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Emergency Preparedness Act of 2008.



**Purpose**

This report meets the requirements of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Emergency Preparedness Act of 2008 (Senate Bill 27-Simitian). It provides specific recommendations to the Legislature and Governor for the creation of a Delta interagency unified command system, an emergency preparedness and response strategy and an exercise/training plan. This report also provides funding recommendations for implementation of the actions contained within.

**Background**

Senate Bill 27 (SB27) was approved by the Governor and filed with the Secretary of State on September 30, 2008.

The bill required the Office of Emergency Services (OES), now called the California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA), upon receipt of appropriate funding, to establish until January 1, 2011 the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Multi-Hazard Coordination Task Force. Led by Cal EMA, the Task Force consisted of representatives from the Delta Protection Commission, Department of Water Resources (DWR) and a single representative of the following Delta counties:

- Contra Costa
- Sacramento
- San Joaquin
- Solano
- Yolo

The specific action recommendations contained in this report have been approved by the Task Force members.

## **SB 27 Requirements**

The Task Force was directed to:

- Make recommendations to the Secretary of Cal EMA relating to the creation of an interagency unified command system organizational framework, in accordance with the guidelines of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS).
- Coordinate the development of a draft emergency preparedness and response strategy for the Delta region for submission to the Secretary of Cal EMA. Where possible, the strategy shall utilize existing interagency plans and planning processes of the involved jurisdictions and agencies that are members of the Delta Protection Commission.
- Develop and conduct all-hazard emergency response exercises and training in the Delta that are designed to test or facilitate implementation of regional coordination protocols.

## **Task Force Funding**

The funding called for in SB27 to establish the Task Force and develop this report was never provided. Despite the lack of funding, Cal EMA, the Delta Protection Commission, DWR and appropriate operational areas considered this report important enough to redirect staff to form the Task Force. To complete the report, the Task Force drew upon work completed in previous regional planning efforts (see below). It is important to note that funding for the implementation of Task Force recommendations contained in this report will be critical to achieving the goal of improved Delta emergency response.

## **Prior Work**

Recommendations contained in this report draw on previous joint emergency planning specific to the Delta region. The following documents were referenced:

- *Basis for Regional Flood Response Planning (April 2008) - Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Flood Response Group*
- *Delta Vision Strategic Plan (October 2008) - Governor's Blue Ribbon Delta Vision Task Force*

## **Delta Region Strategy Goals**

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The following goals were identified by the Task Force and are supported by the specific action recommendations contained in this report.

- Goal 1: Improve the quality and effectiveness of all-hazard emergency response in the Delta region.
- Goal 2: Maintain a level of readiness consistent with identified threats and current capabilities.

## **Action Recommendations: Interagency Unified Command System Organizational Framework**

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- Implement a common regional Interagency Unified Command Organizational Framework. Develop a protocol that all jurisdictions and agencies at all levels of government operating in the Delta in an emergency will use to establish joint field incident commands for flood fight operations and other emergency response functions.
- Adopt and Implement a Delta Multi-Agency Coordination System (MACS) consistent with SEMS/NIMS to address regional resource management and prioritization during multi-jurisdictional emergencies specifically for the Delta. The Delta MACS shall include common operating principals, a defined operating region, core regional policies and examples of operational methodologies. The development of the Delta MACS shall include levee maintaining agencies, cities, operational areas, state and federal agency resources. Funding will need to be established for the development of procedures and communications that allow implementation of the Delta MACS.

## **Action Recommendations: Emergency Preparedness and Response Strategy**

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- Coordinate the identification of potential threats and consequences associated with natural and human-caused hazards affecting the Delta region.
- Identify emergency planning and response authorities, capabilities and specific roles for all governmental agencies involved in emergency response in the Delta.
- Adopt and implement a Regional Mass Evacuation Plan. Continue current efforts by Cal EMA and operational areas to complete an Inland Region Regional Mass Evacuation Plan. Design and execute a regional mass evacuation plan functional exercise within the next two years.

- Develop and implement a Delta region specific Interoperability Communications Plan that supports communication between emergency response agencies including, but not limited to, local maintaining agencies, cities, operational areas, state and federal agencies. The plan shall consider existing communications resources and procedures and develop redundant means of communication between agencies. The plan should consider stakeholder needs and priorities and identify specific equipment, infrastructure and training.
- Actively participate in federal and state flood and evacuation contingency mapping projects. Projects to develop flood contingency and evacuation maps for the Delta are in progress or planned by local, state, and federal agencies. This sustained effort will collect critical data and pre-plans and then use advanced mapping technology to display the information to improve future emergency operations. Local jurisdictions need resources to adequately continue their participation in these efforts.
- Develop a Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Catastrophic Flood Incident Plan that will be the basis for integrated response within the Delta. This plan will incorporate the specific action recommendations contained in this report and any further joint regional protocols that may be warranted and mutually agreed upon.

### **Action Recommendations: Exercise and Training**

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- Conduct Golden Guardian 2011 as an all-hazard, multi-agency, emergency response exercise in the Delta. To extent possible, the Delta regional emergency response agencies should use Golden Guardian 2011 to test existing emergency response plans and policies. Agencies should participate in the exercise in a manner that assesses agency roles and responsibilities.
- Develop and conduct all-hazard emergency response drills and exercises that test multi-agency coordination on an annual basis. Agencies that respond or support emergency response activities in the Delta region should develop and submit a three year exercise plan to Cal EMA annually. Exercise plans should include at least one multi-agency communication drill and a response exercise annually. Agencies should design and conduct drills and exercises annually and document needed and desired improvements in a multi-agency improvement plan. Communication drills should test multiple modes of communication between agencies and agencies with enhanced or improved communications systems. Exercises should alternate between table top exercises, drills, functional and full scale field exercises.
- Emergency Management Policy Development Training. Cal EMA, in collaboration with emergency response agencies in the Delta region, shall develop a training

plan that provides local, state and federal policy makers with the information necessary to effectively create and implement emergency management policies, plans and procedures. The training plan shall include: the history and background and specific information on various past all-hazard emergencies for the Delta region; the roles and accountability of local, state and federal response agencies in preparing for and responding to emergency situations; an overview of related policies and procedures, estimated potential expenses and the current status of major emergency response improvement projects in the Delta region. The training plan shall also include a policy maker communication and outreach component to facilitate disseminating emergency response information directly to policy makers and their staff. This component will provide access to various resources such as web-based training, written and oral presentations, other related training materials, and links to pertinent training opportunities to help educate agencies about developing and maintaining multi-agency emergency response plans and procedures. Consideration should be given to coordinate the policy makers outreach/training schedule with other emergency response training and exercise schedules. To the extent possible, this component should encourage policy makers to participate in SEMS Executive Training.

### **Possible Funding to Ensure Immediate Emergency Actions**

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In California, reclamation districts are currently the public agencies with primary jurisdictional responsibility for maintaining levees before and during a flood emergency. This decentralized reclamation district response system works well and should be continued to ensure the best possible response when the integrity of multiple levees is threatened. However, local reclamation districts often lack access to ready cash to fund significant engineering response. Districts are unable to raise funds via loans or other means after an emergency begins to fund emergency actions.

Other local, state and federal agencies that could provide the needed engineering response are often delayed by the same lack of ready appropriations in their budgets. Another factor that delays action is the lack of clear eligibility for reimbursement when these other agencies act on behalf of the reclamation districts. In order to minimize the losses from flood events, the Task Force recommends developing an emergency funding mechanism that would ensure response to identified threats to levee integrity by the agency best placed to take the needed action. This new response mechanism could be developed in coordination with FEMA to ensure eligibility for post-disaster assistance. Potential programs to be explored as the basis for this new protocol could include, but are not limited to:

- Revising the California Disaster Assistance Act to enhance Cal EMA's ability to advance funds for response efforts

- A flood response fund maintained and managed by the Department of Water Resources' Flood Operations Center
- A collaborative effort between Cal EMA and FEMA to develop an independent Delta all-hazard emergency response fund

### **Preparedness Strategy and Funding Sources**

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The initial projects to set the Delta preparedness strategy in motion are:

- Develop and implement the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Catastrophic Flood Incident Plan including the establishment of joint command, flood fight, and evacuation resource stockpiles.
- Develop and implement the Delta Multi-Agency Coordination System.
- Implement Delta region communications plans, systems and capabilities.
- Develop GIS data and systems, information collection, and joint pre-event decision making for flood and evacuation

There are several potential sources of existing funds for this Preparedness Strategy. The Task Force requests legislative and executive support for actions towards joint applications by Delta region stakeholders to the following funding programs available currently or in the near term:

- Department of Water Resources Flood Emergency Response Projects Direct Grants Program funded by Proposition 84 Bonds;
- FEMA Catastrophic Incident Preparedness Grant Program;
- CAL FED Levee Stability Program authorized through Section 3015 of the Water Resource Development Act of 2007;
- FEMA Pre-Event Mitigation Grant Program;
- Department of Homeland Security Grant Program.

### **Conclusion**

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The composition of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Multi-Hazard Coordination Task Force includes the jurisdictions most likely to be impacted by Delta emergencies. These jurisdictions have the experience and the best expertise necessary to address emergency planning in the Delta. The strategy and recommendations presented here support the stated goals of improving the quality and effectiveness of all-hazard emergency response in the Delta region and maintaining a level of readiness consistent with identified threats and current capabilities.

The Task Force recommends that emergency planning and mitigation activities currently underway continue; and proposes additional activities to improve the ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from all hazards in the Delta. These additional activities focus on the development and implementation of an interagency unified command system organizational framework, an emergency preparedness and response strategy and the appropriate exercises and training. While potential funding sources have been identified in the report, the complexity of the Delta region organizational framework that includes many public and private stakeholders may require further legislation to fund the development and implementation of the recommendations contained within this report.