United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Central California Area Office
7794 Folsom Dam Road
Folsom, California 95630-1799

IN REPLY REFER TO:

AUG 6 2007

CC-100
PRJ-8.00

Mr. Kirk Uhler
Supervisor District 4
Placer County Board of Supervisors
175 Fulweiler Avenue
Auburn, CA 95603

Subject: Folsom Dam Safety and Flood Damage Reduction

Dear Mr. Uhler:

Thank you for your letter dated July 19 2007, regarding dam safety improvements scheduled by the Bureau of Reclamation for Dikes 4, 5, and 6 at Folsom Dam and Reservoir. On behalf of Reclamation and our partner agencies, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency, and the California State Reclamation Board, we appreciate your leadership in facilitating communication and information exchange with neighboring communities on this critical project.

As you indicated, your letter is a follow-up to Reclamation's presentation at the Granite Bay Municipal Advisory Committee (MAC) meeting on July 11, 2007. The primary purpose of our presentation was to provide basic information on the project and listen and fully understand the interests and concerns of residents who may be impacted, either directly or indirectly. One primary interest very clearly expressed by participants was the need for more detailed information. Reclamation acknowledged this interest during the meeting and committed to provide written responses to a broad range of questions and concerns posed to us both during and after the MAC meeting. These questions, including all questions contained in your letter, are enclosed, along with our corresponding responses (Enclosure 1).

Another primary interest expressed by residents of the Mooney Ridge neighborhood was the potential impact of construction activities – particularly borrow operations – to their health, safety, property, and lifestyle. Residents' exclusive remedy was to prohibit any borrow operations in the vicinity of Mooney Ridge, and instead haul material to Dikes 4, 5, and 6 from off-site sources or some other location around the reservoir. Reclamation committed at the meeting to re-evaluate all previous assumptions and reasonable alternatives for meeting that interest.

In summary, our evaluation confirms that hauling the required material type from elsewhere on Federal property, if available, or from offsite commercial sources has significantly greater

environmental impacts than the current project. Depending upon the method of delivery, the predominate environmental impacts were traffic, air quality, and recreation, among others. The evaluation also confirms that the cost of this alternative is significantly higher than the current project. Both the environmental impacts and the increase in cost have real potential to delay the project schedule, thereby extending the dam safety risk.

The current project was developed consistent with an intensive environmental analysis with broad public involvement. A proposal now to abandon the in-reservoir borrow location for an alternative with increased environmental and financial consequences would require consultation with other affected parties. At a minimum, these would include local municipalities, environmental interests, Central Valley Project water and power contractors, and other stakeholders from the surrounding area, downstream, and elsewhere who may absorb the impacts. Reclamation is prepared to participate should there be an interest among the affected parties to engage in that process. Pending an expression of that interest, followed by a consensus proposal, Reclamation is obligated to proceed expeditiously with the current project to correct the dam safety risks at Dikes 4, 5, and 6.

In response to interests and concerns expressed by Mooney Ridge residents, Reclamation will continue to optimize project planning, scheduling, and construction methods. Among other results, we expect this will further reduce the amount of borrow material required particularly for Dikes 4 and 6. In addition, Reclamation will further ensure that all plans, specifications, and contracts associated with the current project conform with the following accommodations:

1. Scope. Only up to 10 of the original 84 acres evaluated in the Environmental Impact Statement/Report (EIS/R) near Mooney Ridge will be disturbed for borrow material in support of dam safety improvements to Dikes 4, 5, and 6. The final, specific 10-acre site is still being determined. However, the location will be confined to some portion of a 20-acre in-reservoir area near Dike 4 in the western sector of the original 84 acres (Enclosure 2). In providing this assurance, Reclamation will forego any plans to borrow material from the remaining 74 acres evaluated in the EIS/R below Mooney Ridge.

2. Explosives. No explosives will be used as part of the borrow operation or any other component of dam safety improvements to Dikes 4, 5, or 6.

3. Scheduling. Borrow operations will be conducted during the late fall, winter, and early spring to further reduce potential impacts on recreation activities.

4. Construction period. To the extent practicable: (a) the total construction period for Dike 5 will be limited to approximately 9 months, (b) the total construction period for Dikes 4 and 6 together will likewise be limited to approximately 9 months, and (c) borrow operations will be limited to approximately 10 - 16 weeks during each of the two construction periods.

5. Restoration. Upon completion, the borrow area will be restored essentially similar to its pre-construction condition.

6. Asbestos. Field investigations and literature research by Reclamation consistently conclude that there is no asbestos present in any surface material or underlying geological formations in the Mooney Ridge area. However, to reassure local residents, Reclamation will develop and implement a plan to test and monitor for asbestos continuously during the construction periods and will provide results on a regular basis to the public.

7. Mercury. Construction activities will not increase exposure to those levels of mercury already present in the entire American River watershed, including sedimentary material in Folsom Lake. To provide further assurances, Reclamation will develop and implement a plan to test and monitor for mercury continuously during the construction periods and will provide results on a regular basis to the public.

8. Dust and noise. Reclamation will implement additional measures above the required standards to further reduce dust and noise. The dust and noise abatement plan with these measures will be posted on the Reclamation website at http://www.usbr.gov/mp/jfp/index.html.

9. Communication. Reclamation will provide detailed information to the public on the Reclamation website at http://www.usbr.gov/mp/jfp/index.html prior to and throughout the construction periods. Reclamation will also establish an information hotline and provide periodic briefings and updates as requested by the Granite Bay MAC and other local and county governments.

Thank you again for your leadership and continuing interest in this project. Please contact me at 916-989-7200 should you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Finnegan
Area Manager

Enclosures – 2

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