

Small Communities Workgroup

The 2012 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP) identified the goal of providing 100-year protection to small communities, where feasible. The Small Communities Workgroup will assist the RFMP team in identifying the feasibility of achieving 100-year level of protection standards for small communities within the region.

Small communities are defined as developed areas with fewer than 10,000 residents. Because small communities do not fall in the category of urban or urbanizing areas (10,000 or more residents, currently or within the next 10 years), they are not required to meet the Senate Bill 5 State-mandated 200-year level of protection requirements for urban areas. However, recent legislative changes imposed upon the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), via the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, will increase flood insurance rates for properties that do not meet FEMA standards for 100-year level of protection. These increases in rates may prompt small communities to reassess the cost and benefits of achieving or maintaining a 100-year level of protection.

The Workgroup will also help the RFMP team examine and review the various small community solutions proposed in the 2012 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP). In many cases the CVFPP proposes a ring levee as a first alternative to remedy flood inundation in communities. The cost of improving an adjacent system levee along with the required new levee to enclose the community may be very high relative to the population protected. Therefore, ring levees may not prove to be the most effective solution to the problem of flood inundation. Other, more simple and direct ways to address flood local problems must be envisioned and brought into the discussion.