



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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NACo RENEWS CALL FOR EQUITABLE ARMY CORPS FUNDING

The National Association of Counties (NACo) this week renewed its call to have the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers more equitably distribute critical flood control funding to rural and economically-disadvantaged communities.

At the request of Supervisor Zach Friend, a NACo board member, NACo voted to renew its call for federal representatives to protect agricultural and low-income neighborhoods from flood risk by altering existing cost-benefit analyses benefitting higher-income, higher-value communities.

NACo is a national organization working to strengthen America's counties. The resolution's unanimous adoption means NACo and its member counties will proactively advocate to Congress and President Biden's administration on behalf of the issue.

"Using funding formulas that favor wealthy neighborhoods over disadvantaged communities is an injustice that must be corrected," Friend said. "I am pleased to have the support of my fellow county representatives across the U.S. in seeking to correct this error so that all communities can compete for funding on a level playing field."

"Counties play a critical role in water infrastructure, flood control and our readiness to respond to natural disasters," NACo Executive Director Matthew Chase said. "These resolutions will help us advocate for improvements to federal regulations and assistance to build safer, more resilient communities."

Locally, the Pajaro River Flood Risk Management Project has advanced to the design phase, but requires additional funding before the decades-long project can move into the construction phase. However, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers faces a backlog of projects and is forced to prioritize funding based on several factors, including cost-benefit analyses. Originally constructed in 1949, the Pajaro River levee system now protects approximately 55,000 people and has experienced increased flooding risk, including two flooding incidents in the 1990s resulting in millions in damages and loss of life.