

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4305

September 27, 2007

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Subcommittee on State and
Foreign Operations
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Judd Gregg
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State and
Foreign Operations
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman and Ranking Member:

Included within the Fiscal Year 2008 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill recently completed by the Senate is an important provision allocating \$10 million for the United States International Boundary and Water Commission's (IBWC) Rio Grande Flood Control System Rehabilitation. This levee system provides critical flood control protection in a region of Texas where hurricanes and flash floods are far too common.

The IBWC has the important task to monitor issues affecting the international water between the United States and Mexico. As you know, the IBWC levee system is a unique program within the Department of State. It is also unique within federal flood control projects in that it is completely federally managed. Unlike levee systems under the jurisdiction of the Army Corps of Engineers that benefit from a local-federal cost-share partnership, the South Texas levees rely solely on annual federal appropriations dollars. Therefore, it is important that the federal government provides adequate funding for flood protection—the first line of defense against future water related natural disasters.

In recent years, concerns have surfaced regarding the capability of this levee system to sustain a heavy rain, much less major flooding. Accordingly, I would like to bring to your attention a recent article in The Houston Chronicle which puts into perspective state and local concerns about neglected funding for this levee system.

As the Senate and House convene to reconcile differences in the FY08 State-Foreign Operations Appropriations bill, I respectfully ask that South Texas Levee Flood Control Rehabilitation System Project receive full consideration for the maximum amount of federal dollars possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



JOHN CORNYN
United States Senator

Enclosure