

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4305

March 28, 2008

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd, Chairman
The Honorable Thad Cochran, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-131, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chairman
The Honorable Judd Gregg, Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations
and Related Programs
127 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman and Ranking Member

As the Committee begins its consideration of the Fiscal Year 2009 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriation bill, I respectfully encourage the committee to include sufficient funding for the United States International Boundary and Water Commission's (IBWC) Lower Rio Grande Valley Levee Flood Control Project. The IBWC has estimated that it will cost \$125 million to fully repair the levee system. I support this request as funding for these levees is vital to provide critical flood control protection from hurricanes and storms far too common along the Texas Gulf coast.

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—one that 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 the Lower Rio Grande Valley region.

In recent years, concerns have surfaced regarding the capability of the Lower Rio Grande Valley region to sustain major flooding. In fact, studies conducted prove that levees in this area are deficient in height and structurally unsound. Adequate funding of this levee system is needed to ensure flood protection for these communities, many of whom could easily find themselves in the path of a devastating storm that would deluge South Texas.

I would appreciate your help in assuring that the Lower Rio Grande Valley Levee Flood Control Project is fairly considered in the Subcommittee markup and receives full consideration for the maximum amount of federal dollars possible.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has a pecuniary interest in the congressionally directed spending item(s) that I have requested for Fiscal Year 2009, consistent with the requirements of paragraph 9 of Rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Cornyn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

JOHN CORNYN
United States Senator

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