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Evacuation at Oroville Dam Drives Local Response

Flood Control District Looks to Reevaluate, Improve Evacuation Plans

In response to the 200,000 people evacuated downstream of the Oroville Dam near Oroville California, King County Flood Control District Chair Reagan Dunn and Vice Chair Dave Upthegrove announced plans to introduce legislation that reviews and assesses gaps in existing emergency action plans associated with dams in King County and evacuation and sheltering plans in place to serve populations that would be affected by dam failures.

“The primary role of government, and the mission of the King County Flood Control District, is to protect people and property,” King County Flood Control District Chair Reagan Dunn. “It is vital for us as a region to learn from what is one of the largest scale evacuations as a result of a dam emergency in our nation’s history.”

“The flooding in Oroville served as a wake-up call,” said King County Flood Control District Vice Chair Dave Upthegrove. “Now, before one of the four major dams in King County fails, is the time to make sure we have the appropriate emergency action plans in place. This study will help save the lives and protect the property of King County residents.”

King County is home to four major dams with thousands of people and homes living in the Green, Cedar, White, Snoqualmie/Skykomish River Basins. Since 2007, the King County Flood Control District has partnered with local cities to support flood reduction and reduce flood risk.

Dunn and Upthegrove’s proposed legislation calls on the County Executive, working with our local and federal partners, to review the existing emergency action plans associated with the major dams in King County and prioritize actions necessary to update or create plans for evacuation and shelter for those affected by dam failures. This study, funded by the King County Flood Control District, will prioritize the actions necessary to address existing gaps in the current evacuations and sheltering plans serving the residents of King County affected by dam failures.

The King County Flood Control District is a special purpose government created to provide funding and policy oversight for flood protection and flood risk reduction projects and programs in King County. The Flood Control District’s Board of Supervisors is composed of the nine members of the King County Council. The Water and Land Resources Division of the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks develops and implements the approved flood protection projects and programs. Information about the Flood Control District is available at www.kingcountyfloodcontrol.org.

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