



From the Texas Colorado River Floodplain Coalition

TCRFC Leaders Meet with U.S. Congressional Members;
Discuss Funding for Army Corps of Engineers Floodplain Study

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Texas Colorado River Floodplain Coalition (TCRFC) leaders visited U.S. congressional members and their staffs in Washington, D.C., this spring to discuss the importance of fully funding the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers floodplain study. The study is the first to examine flood risks and damages throughout the lower Colorado River basin, including its tributaries.

Following the visit, six members of the Texas congressional delegation signed official letters of support for fully funding the floodplain study.

"I think it was a big success," TCRFC Chairman Domingo Montalvo, a member of the Wharton City Council, said of the meetings March 9-11. "We have stuck to the plan to come together and stay united as a group of communities, as well as (stay united) with our partners, the federal and state agencies."

Vice Chairman James Oakley, a Burnet County commissioner, also represented TCRFC. With the TCRFC leaders was Lower Colorado River Authority General Manager Joe Beal, who participated in several meetings along with senior LCRA staff. The coalition, a partnership of 38 cities and 15 counties in the Colorado River basin, coordinates efforts to reduce and mitigate flood damage. LCRA provides administrative and technical support to TCRFC.

The group met with Reps. Mike Conaway, Michael McCaul, Ron Paul and Chet Edwards. Each of them expressed support for the federal floodplain study. The visitors also met with staff from the following offices: Reps. Ruben Hinojosa, Lamar Smith and John Carter, and Sens. John Cornyn and Kay Bailey Hutchison.

"We were honored to be so well-received by members of Congress," said Oakley. "They were very interested in flood issues and recognized the unique opportunities and challenges facing locally-elected officials in our efforts to protect life and property during flood events."

The TCRFC leaders expressed concern that the current budget may not be adequate to keep the study on schedule. While Corps of Engineers staff members have said they need \$1 million in fiscal year 2006 to keep the floodplain study on schedule, the Administration budget allocates only \$300,000 to the Corps of Engineers to continue the study in 2006.

In addition to successful meetings on Capitol Hill, Montalvo and Oakley met with officials from Federal Emergency Management Agency at the national headquarters to discuss floodplain mapping and the need for increased local involvement.