

# Frequently Asked Questions

## BACKGROUND

### What's the issue?

Recently repaired levees must be maintained to strict state and federal requirements. Currently, there is a \$1.3 million shortfall between existing and needed revenues to adequately fund levee maintenance. These levees protect approximately 25,000 properties and 75,000 residents in Live Oak, Yuba City, and unincorporated Sutter County, so they must be properly operated and maintained to reduce the potential for flooding.

### What's the solution?

A proposed Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Assessment on properties that benefit from the levees to help pay for ongoing O&M costs. The proposed Assessment must be approved by a majority vote of property owners through the California Proposition 218 process.

### Who is proposing the Assessment?

The Feather River West Levee Financing Authority (FRWLFA), is a joint powers agency formed in 2020 by Levee District 1 (LD 1), Levee District 9 (LD 9) and Sutter County with the agreement to work together on long-term funding for levee O&M.

### How are these levees managed?

The Levees are operated and maintained by LD 1, LD 9, and State Maintenance Area 3 (MA 3).

### Is this the same assessment voted on in 2010?

No. That was an assessment needed to pay for much needed levee repairs. The repaired levees, completed in 2020, must now be properly operated and maintained to keep our properties and community protected and to comply with strict state and federal regulations.

## How is the \$1.3 million funding gap calculated?

**Total Required Funding: \$1.9 Million**

**Existing Funding: \$621,000**

**Funding Gap: \$1.3 Million**

# ASSESSMENT

## What's an Assessment?

An annual cost paid on each parcel of land that receives a special benefit from a service. In this case, the special benefit is the reduction in flood damages that results from properly maintained levees. Assessments are calculated for each individual parcel using a variety of factors, like land use type, parcel size, structure type and size, and flood depths.

## What does a proposed O&M Assessment mean for you?

In May 2022, approximately 25,000 property owners will receive ballots by mail and be asked to vote on the proposed O&M Assessment. If approved by property owners, the Assessment will be collected annually on property tax bills and used to pay for levee O&M. Assessment revenues can't be used for any other purpose.

## What does a YES vote mean?

If property owners approve the Assessment, local agencies will maintain control of our levee maintenance and costs. Costs will be consistent, predictable, and lower in the long term.

## What does a NO vote mean?

If the Assessment is not approved by property owners, levee districts will run out of money to operate and maintain levees as required.

Once that occurs, the only option will be to turn over levee operations and maintenance to the State. Costs, which will be passed on to property owners without a vote, will fluctuate unpredictably and be higher in the long term. The community will not have local levee districts to prioritize emergency response and flood fighting during high water events.

## How was the Assessment amount for each property calculated?

Assessments for each individual property are based on factors that include location, land use, acreage, structure size, structure contents, and the flood depth zone.

**Use the Assessment Calculator on [frwlfa.org](https://frwlfa.org) to calculate your proposed Assessment.**

## If the proposed O&M Assessment passes, how long will the cost apply?

Levee O&M is an ongoing responsibility, so the proposed Assessment will continue as long as the service is provided.

## How will the Assessment keep up with inflation?

The Assessment will be adjusted with the CPI, but never exceed 4% a year.

## What happens to existing assessments/funding if the proposed O&M Assessment passes?

District/Maintenance Area	Current Funding	If O&M Assessment passes
LD 1	Two existing O&M Assessments	Replace existing with single new Assessment
LD 9	A fraction of the 1% general property tax collected by Sutter County	New Assessment plus fraction of 1% property tax
MA 3	An Assessment imposed by the State of CA	O&M would be transferred* to LD 1 and new Assessment would replace existing Assessment

\*Transfer occurs through a legal process that will be concluded if the proposed Assessment passes

# LEVEE DISTRICTS

## What are levee districts, and what do they do?

These are agencies that provide a public safety service by operating and maintaining levees and associated facilities. Their budget is designed to cover costs of services, provide a modest reserve for planned and unplanned capital costs, staffing (3 people for 27 miles of levee), fixed costs, and comply with a long list of state and federal O&M requirements. See a comprehensive list of O&M requirements at [www.frwlf.org](http://www.frwlf.org).

## What's being done on the Sutter Bypass?

The Sutter Butte Flood Control Agency and the State are coordinating on improvements to the Sutter Bypass and other flood control facilities over time. Effective long-term O&M remains a priority to protect the \$380M investment in the recently rehabilitated Feather River west levee, which provides flood protection to properties in the south Yuba City Basin.

# CA PROPOSITION 218

## What's the Proposition 218 process?

Owners of properties within the proposed Assessment district will receive a mail-in ballot at the end of April. Votes are weighted by the dollar amount of the proposed Assessment (e.g., \$1 = 1 vote). The ballots must be returned by June 22. If the proposed Assessment is approved by property owners, it may then be adopted by the FRWLFA Board. The benefits and associated Assessment amounts are determined through an Engineer's Report.

## What's an Engineer's Report?

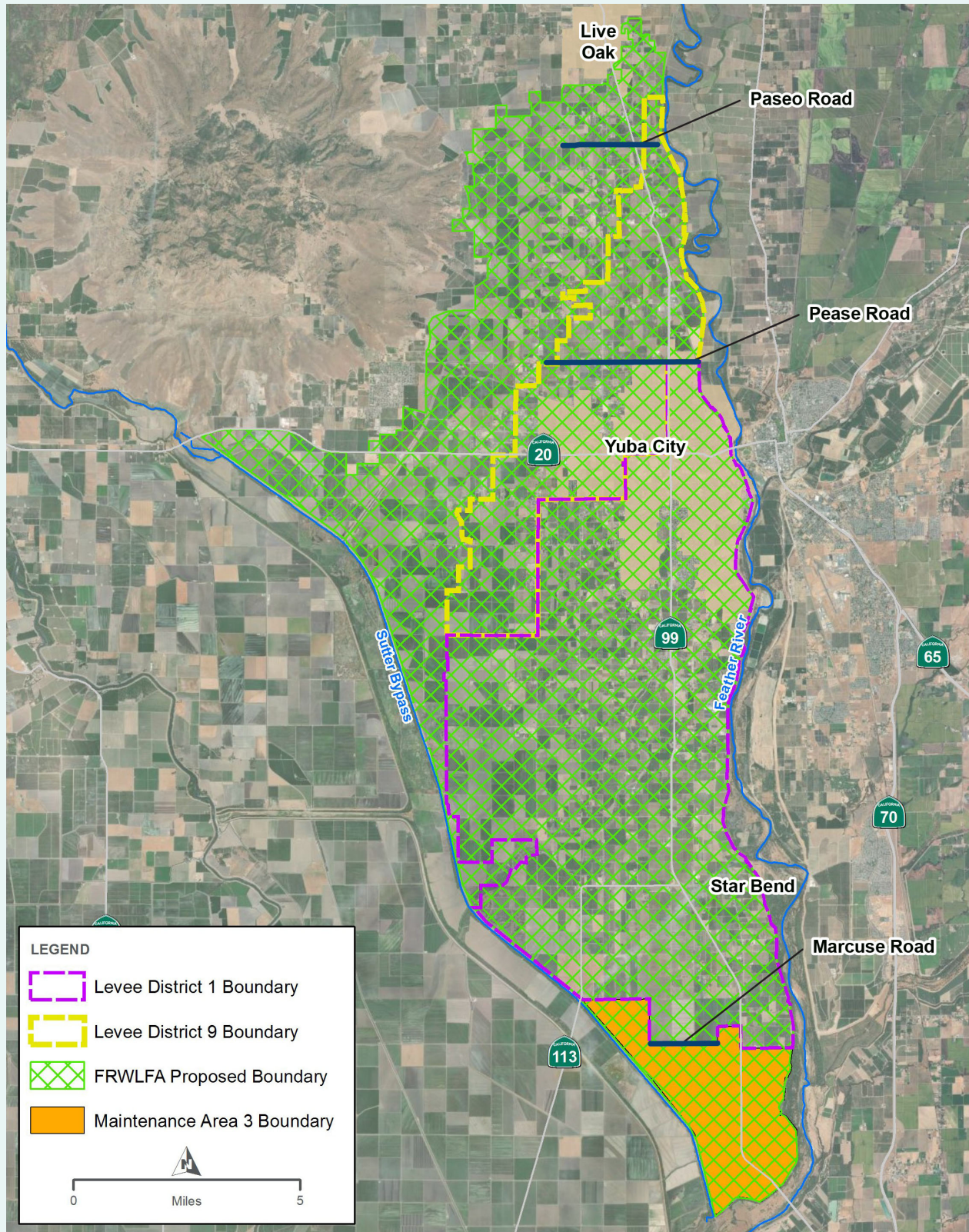
An Engineer's Report, as mandated by California law, provides the technical analysis to support a proposed Assessment district. The Engineer's Report quantifies the proportionate "special benefit" that each parcel in the proposed Assessment district will receive from the service provided — in this case, the O & M of improved levees and flood control facilities associated with the Feather River West Levee system.

**The Engineer's Report is available on**  
**[www.frwlf.org](http://www.frwlf.org)**



# MORE INFORMATION

## What are the boundaries of the proposed Assessment District?



FEATHER RIVER WEST LEVEE  
FINANCING AUTHORITY



FRWLFA PROPOSED ASSESSMENT DISTRICT



800.401.8302



info@frwlfa.org



frwlfa.org