

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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## **U.S. REP. GABRIELLE GIFFORDS INTRODUCES BILL TO ASSIST MARANA WITH FEMA FLOOD PLAIN DESIGNATION**

### ***Legislation would require agency to consider mitigation effects of levee-like structures***

**WASHINGTON** – U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords has introduced legislation that would require the Federal Emergency Management Agency to consider the flood mitigation effects of levee-like structures as it updates and revises flood maps.

The bill would have a direct impact on the Town of Marana, where officials hope to convince the agency that three major structures – Interstate 10, the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and the Central Arizona Project canal – provide significant flood protection.

“A one-size-fits-all approach to the designation of levees does not make sense,” said Giffords. “My bill is rooted in common sense. It requires FEMA to recognize that structures and features other than formal levees can still restrain or divert floodwaters. Particularly in the mostly dry deserts of Arizona, a structure like a highway can play a significant role in mitigating the impacts of

rare flood occurrences, and this should be accounted for on the flood maps for the area.”

Giffords introduced the *Levee-Like Structures Consideration Act of 2007* with Rep. Steven LaTourette, a seven-term Republican from Painesville, Ohio. The bill would require FEMA to create a process open to those communities that have one or more structures that have been recognized previously on FEMA flood maps as providing some flood protection but do not to meet federal levee standards.

The legislation was enthusiastically welcomed by Marana Mayor Ed Honea. “The Town of Marana greatly appreciates all the work performed by Congresswoman Giffords and the Arizona delegation on our situation with FEMA,” he said. “The congresswoman’s leadership on this issue shows her dedication to the people of her district. She is a great advocate for Marana.”

FEMA is currently revising and updating flood maps around the country as part of the Flood Map Modernization Initiative. Under the provisions of Giffords’ bill, FEMA would be required to provide a 24 month period to communities with levee-like structures, during which:

- The flood protection provided by the levee-like structures in question would continue to be recognized;
- Flood insurance requirements and rates would remain unchanged for the area affected by the structures;
- The local community could collect scientific and technical data, at its own expense, to determine the actual effect of the structures on flood risk; and
- FEMA would be required to consider any such data submitted by the community in revising and updating flood maps.

“It is unreasonable for FEMA to assume that levee-like structures have no flood mitigation effect,” the Tucson lawmaker explained. “My preference is for an administrative remedy and I am working with other members of Congress to change FEMA’s policy. But should that effort fall short, I want my constituents in Marana and throughout Southeastern Arizona to know that I am with them all the way in this fight. FEMA’s procedures and the resulting maps should reflect reality, not the arbitrary decisions of a remote federal agency

A copy of the bill, H.R. 4050 can be found online at <http://thomas.loc.gov/>