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Management

Hearing:
“California’s Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta: Planning and Preparing for
Hazards and Disasters”

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Chairman Denham, Ranking Member Norton, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony today regarding the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and to brief you on the preparedness efforts that have been, and continue to be, accomplished to prepare for when disaster strikes.

First, however, I would like to acknowledge the Chairman’s commitment towards enhancing preparedness efforts at all levels of government. Your leadership has greatly impacted efforts to ensure our communities are better prepared to endure multi-hazard disasters.

The California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA) is responsible for coordinating the State’s overall preparedness efforts and enhancing our capabilities for both intentional and natural disasters. Cal EMA coordinates homeland security and emergency response under the mission of saving lives and reducing property loss during times of disaster and works to expedite recovery from the effects of disasters.

In coordination with the National Preparedness Goal, California's overall preparedness system is comprised of five Mission Areas: prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery. In all of these mission areas, Cal EMA strives to build a streamlined system that will reduce the impacts of both natural and intentional disasters. We have learned significant and valuable lessons from the disasters we have faced and we use those lessons to direct our current actions and establish best practices.

One of the significant lessons we have learned is that we must focus our investments on disaster preparedness efforts so that we can mitigate the devastation of human suffering and financial loss in the future. We have learned that we must invest financial resources on the front end to ensure that our infrastructure is secure, that early warning systems are in place, and that the public is well informed about potential risk and have the tools they need to prepare themselves and their families for when disaster strikes. As you are well aware, California is faced with a daunting list of disaster risks. Much like the likelihood of a catastrophic earthquake, the daunting threat and risk of a catastrophic flood incident within the California Delta is very real. As our scientists warn, it is not a matter of *if* it will occur, but rather, *when* it will occur.

Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Emergency Response Efforts

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Emergency Preparedness Act of 2008 required the Cal EMA to establish the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Multi-Hazard Coordination Task Force. The Task Force was comprised of Cal EMA, the Delta Protection Commission, the Department of Water Resources and the five counties within the Delta region: Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano and Yolo.

The mission of the task force was to develop recommendations to improve the quality and effectiveness of an all-hazard emergency response in the Delta region, while maintaining a level of readiness consistent with identified threats and current capabilities. As a result of the recommendations and efforts of the task force, we have worked with our partner agencies to make significant strides towards these efforts.

Delta Multi-Agency Coordination System: We adopted and implemented a Delta Multi-Agency Coordination System (MACS), which was successfully exercised during the 2011 Golden Guardian Full Scale Exercise, to test the State's ability to allocate scarce resources throughout the Delta region during a catastrophic flood. The exercise focused on preparing for, responding to and recovering from a catastrophic flood in the Northern Region and included more than 5,000 local,

regional, state and federal responders, as well as state agencies and nonprofit emergency response and private industry partners who participated in various events throughout the three day exercise. The Delta MACS document is in the process of being integrated into statewide procedures to ensure maximum efficiency and standardization for emergency response with our key partners, including local stakeholders, the California National Guard and the California Department of Water Resources.

Regional Mass Evacuation Plan: Cal EMA held a regional mass evacuation tabletop exercise on January 11, 2012, to provide participants an opportunity to evaluate their current response concepts, plans, policies, procedures, and capabilities for notification, evacuation, and mass care and sheltering in response to a flood based scenario. This exercise was a regional collaboration between Cal EMA and its local and state partners and will serve towards the development of a regional mass evacuation plan.

Delta Region Specific Interoperability Communications Plan: The California Delta Region Interoperable Communications Plan was updated in February 2011 and documents the interoperable communications resources available within the designated area. The plan also includes specifics such as who controls each resource along with the rules of use and/or operational procedures for the activation and deactivation of each resource.

Flood and Evacuation Contingency Mapping: Cal EMA, in direct partnership with the Department of Water Resources and other state and local stakeholders, participated in a project led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which identified resources and facilities in the Delta, or those that could be easily deployed to the Delta, for any emergency response operation during a flood event. As part of this effort, existing shelter and evacuation plans were reviewed to recognize resources and opportunities available for response and identify weaknesses and needs. A series of flood contingency maps were prepared to highlight the identified resources and outline general emergency response procedures.

Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Catastrophic Flood Incident Plan- Cal EMA is currently initiating the development of a Northern California Catastrophic Flood Response Plan based on the objectives recommended in the task force's report. A contract was awarded less than a month ago using Homeland Security Grant Funds allocated to Cal EMA. The United States Geological Survey's (USGS) ARKstorm scenario will be used to drive the plan development. We are working with the

USGS to modify its scenario to also recognize 100 and 200 year flood events in the Central Valley, before reaching the 1,000 year flood event as described in ARKstorm. This modification will allow us to build upon existing government and water agency plans already in place.

We all know that the work we do is faced with uncertainties and we must continue to work together to ensure that our resources are put to the best use possible. California continues to be recognized as a national leader in homeland security and emergency management efforts, and with your support we will continue to work tirelessly to advance efforts which we believe will provide the greatest benefits for our state and nation.

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