Regent Tom Zuckerman welcomed and thanked the attendees and noted that the discussion the group has had appears to be having a positive influence on drafts of new legislation.

Margit Aramburu, Director, Natural Resources Institute, welcomed the group and asked that comments regarding the draft notes of the November 20, 2006 meeting be forwarded to her for inclusion.

**Presentation on and Discussion of DWR’s Flood Safe California:**

Dr. Les Harder, Deputy Director for Public Safety and Business Operations for the Department of Water Resources (DWR), made a detailed presentation on DWR’s Flood Safe California, the administration’s new strategic initiative to improve flood protection for California. Using copies of presentation slides, he reviewed the initiative in detail. He noted that DWR has invited representatives of environmental groups, cities, counties and businesses, and flood plain managers to a series of meetings to discuss the initiative.

In response to a series of questions, Dr. Harder noted that:

- the bonds provide almost five billion dollars over 10 years,
- it would include flood bypasses,
- a population of more than 10,000 would be considered urban,
- flood protection strategic plans are needed first to be followed by high priority projects; however, some early projects will be undertaken while the study is in process,
- the initiative would grant funds to locals for their studies and regional plans,
- the goals is to increase flood protection system wide,
- urban levees would likely be first in line for funds to protect human life and property,
- FEMA and Corps guidelines would be relied upon,
- reservoir operations could also enhance flood protection,
- there is not enough funding in the two bonds to bring the entire system up to the desired level of safety,
- locals can use existing standards while plans are underway,
- projects that are “ready to go” may receive early funding,
- maintenance is a key component of the overall system,
- the new bond funds are slated to be expended and/or allocated within ten years,
- the plan will be look at the Corps’ original design and will included updated figures on hydrology, and find ways to address predicted climate change,
- the bonds will fund levee maintenance only in the Delta,
• locally-prepared regional plans should address land use issues regarding future development in the deep flood plain,
• the State will advocate for federal funds for flood control projects,
• the initiative will help fund enhanced emergency response,
• it will more cost effective to fund projects to increase flood protection for urban areas to a high level of protection rather than to bring all the levees to one common level and then later bring some levees to a higher level of flood protection,
• additional floodways could be considered as part of Statewide planning,
• the bond funds could be used to fund studies to protect new development
• the current FEMA standards will be used by the State in the upcoming planning process,
• land use decisions will remain in local hands
• studies should be prepared first; the bond funds are inadequate to fund bringing all the State’s levees to 100 year flood protection levels,
• regional studies should address where growth will take place and how to provide adequate flood protection
• the State will be able to fund 100% of some levee work and 100% of some emergency work
• flood protection for small communities need to be addressed
• the purpose of a flood system is to reduce the chances of flooding, but it cannot totally eliminate flooding; the State will give grants for studies that will be used to develop regional solutions
• grants to bring levees to more than 100 year level of protection may require additional funding by local project sponsor
• much of the bond funds are identified for project levees and levees within the Legal Delta

In addition to questions, several comments were offered to Dr. Harder, including:
• the State Plan should first restore the existing levees to their design standard, then develop a strategy for system wide improvement to obtain a 200 year level of protection,
• a methodology of cost/benefit analysis should be developed to determine which projects/locations/jurisdictions should receive earlier and/or more funding,
• planning should look 40 years into the future to analyze urbanization needs against flood risks and other impacts,
• expenditure of funds for levee improvements should take into account engineering judgment not just an artificial planning,
• if the State wants to pass more flood water through the system the State should identify flood plain needs and inform local government to those larger needs can be reflecting in local planning documents,
• the State should consider funding work that will provide the “best bang for the buck” for the overall system.
Discussion of Draft Letter Regarding A State Flood Plan:

Ms Aramburu reviewed the draft letter to be sent from the staff of the NRI summarizing the comments of group regarding a State Flood Plan. Comments were made suggesting change “will” to “should”; change “1957 profile” to “applicable design standard”, address goal of #6, and other minor changes. Ms Aramburu agreed to make changes and then will send the letter to members of the legislature.

Presentation on and Discussion of SB 5:

Senator Mike Machado briefly reviewed his new legislation, SB 5, which suggests that the need is for preparation of a State plan, which then would be implemented locally and through the preparation of local plans. He said that the goal of 500-year protection would be a key point of discussion, and would be for urbanized areas. He noted that a State flood plan needs to address a system, should be dynamic to adjust to changing conditions, should assign responsibilities, should disseminate information, define roles, and create a baseline of flood protection for public safety. He said the overall goal would be to bring all areas to a common level of safety, with urban areas first to protect highest levels of population.

Discussion of Cost-Sharing for Flood Protection for Urban Areas:

Ms Aramburu noted that several issues had been raised including should there be different levels of protection for small towns versus “urban” areas and should there be cost-sharing between urban and rural areas to ensure the entire system is brought to required standards and maintained. Ms Aramburu reviewed the chart of bond funds and their use for flood protection that was distributed before the meeting.

Dr. Harder reviewed the traditional cost share of 65% federal; 25% State; and 10% local funds. He noted that to restore the project levees to the original profiles, where feasible, the State could pay 100% of non-federal costs in rural areas. He said that DWR would propose that urban areas would continue to pay a local cost share for both repairs and improvements.

Senator Machado noted that critical decisions will need to be made as the Budget Bill is heard in committees in late spring; the Budget Bill will address implementation of the bond funds in the upcoming fiscal year. Final decisions will be made in June of 2007.

Ms Aramburu summarized that key decisions include: what is the baseline for the flood protection levees and what cost sharing will be used.

Discussion of Another Meeting:

- The group determined it would be useful to meet again to continue discussion of funding issues.
- Ms Aramburu suggested the group also discuss liability issues.