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September 3, 2010

Help is on the way; stay prepared this flood season!

Dear Floodplain Property Owner,

I'm pleased to share good news with you – President Obama recently signed legislation that funds improvements to strengthen the Howard Hanson Dam, reducing the risk of flooding to the Green River Valley. The funding allows the dam's operator, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to complete repairs by the 2011/2012 flood season. Once these measures are in place, the Corps believes that the dam could be operated at full flood-control capacity for decades.

Storms in January 2009 weakened the dam, causing the Corps to restrict the water level in the reservoir behind the dam and increasing the risk of flooding in the valley. Given the significant public safety and economic threat that a weakened Howard Hanson Dam would cause, the King County Flood Control District, along with the Corps, Governor Gregoire, King County and valley city elected officials, quickly came together to prepare for the potential impacts of flooding and to advocate for emergency repairs.

Our local congressional delegation responded and we are very appreciative of their efforts to secure the necessary funds to provide additional repairs. The repairs will provide critically needed protection and time for the Corps to evaluate whether additional long-term repairs are necessary. We must all continue to be diligent to protect the people, businesses and infrastructure of the Green River Valley and to minimize devastating economic impacts from potential floods.

What does this mean for you?

While last year's temporary improvements were successful at lowering the risk of flooding in the Green River Valley, the dam will continue to operate at a limited capacity during the upcoming 2010/2011 flood season. *Therefore there is still a heightened risk of flooding.* It is important for you to get ready and stay ready.

- Buy flood insurance, if you have not already done so;
- Establish or update an emergency plan for your family, business, pets or livestock; and
- Have emergency supplies on hand.

Please help us spread the word about the continued risk of flooding during the 2010/2011 flood season and the importance of being prepared. Share this information with your family, neighbors, friends and coworkers.

For more flood preparedness information, please go to www.kingcounty.gov/floodplans. If you have questions or comments please contact info@kingcountyfloodcontrol.org. For information about the King County Flood Control District please go to www.kingcountyfloodcontrol.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia Patterson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julia Patterson, Chair
Board of Supervisors
King County Flood Control District

The King County Flood Control District is a special purpose government created to provide funding and policy oversight for flood protection projects and programs in King County. The Flood Control District's Board is composed of the members of the King County Council. The Water and Land Resources Division of the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks develops and implements the approved flood protection projects and programs. Information is available at www.kingcountyfloodcontrol.org.