



For Immediate Release

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Critical “Chiefs Report” Milestone Completed Moving Tulsa-West Tulsa Levee Project Forward

Today marked another milestone in the funding of the Tulsa-West Tulsa levees as Army Corps of Engineers Lt. General Todd Semonite signed his “Chiefs Report” signaling the next step toward implementation of the project to improve the levee system. The Chief’s Report is the formal recommendation from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the improvements necessary so the Tulsa Levees can continue to minimize the risk to life and property in communities they protect from flooding. It will be submitted to Congress for authorization and appropriation. Because the project was funded through previous supplemental appropriations, the Corps has the flexibility to begin the preconstruction engineering and design phase immediately with any unspent funds from the feasibility study. To ensure the Corps prioritizes funding for the construction of this project in future fiscal year budgets, Senator Inhofe is working to ensure the WRDA 2020 bill includes an authorization for this project.

The project is estimated to cost \$150-\$200 million for construction, and includes the following specific improvements:

- 13 miles of a filtered berm with toe drain
- Filtered floodway structure
- Two detention ponds
- Reconstruction of 5 pumps stations for system-wide effectiveness
- Environmental mitigation as applicable and appropriate.

“The Tulsa Levees have been rated unacceptable and high risk for far too long, and today we finally have the necessary approval to begin modernizing and upgrading the levees,” Inhofe said. “We’re now ready to move to the preconstruction engineering and design phase, bringing us a critical step closer to protecting the lives of the people and the hundreds of homes and businesses that rely on the levees. I appreciate the tireless work of Lt. General Semonite and the Tulsa District Office staff, and appreciate all they did to make this project a priority.”

“The news that the Chief’s Report has been signed today is outstanding news and a testament to Sen. Inhofe’s work on this project,” Todd Kilpatrick, District 12 Levee Commissioner, said. “This is something that has been years in the making, not just something that can happen overnight. Thank you, Sen. Inhofe, for prioritizing the Tulsa-West Tulsa Levees and remembering what is important to Oklahoma. The signing of this report means Tulsans will be protected from flood like the ones we endured last year for years to come.”

“All the years of working with Senator Inhofe to get funding for the levees is paying off,” Karen Keith, Tulsa County Commissioner, District 2, said. “I’m thrilled to learn that the Chief’s Report is signed and this project on the path for future funding. These levees are a safety net for all the families living along the river on Tulsa’s west side. A dense industry corridor, including refineries vital to the economy of Tulsa and Oklahoma, rely on these levees to keep their doors open. Senator Inhofe has been a steady force as an advocate to get these levees fixed I am so grateful and humbled. This is a victory for our team that includes the US Army Corps of Engineers Tulsa District and, of course, Todd Kilpatrick our Levee Commissioner. I must also thank Lt. General Todd Semonite who toured our levees then flew back here during the high-water event last year. Bottom line thank you Senator Inhofe to say you were tenacious is an understatement.”

“The news today that Lt. General Todd Semonite has signed the Chief’s Report for the Tulsa and West Tulsa Levee Feasibility Study is an enormous milestone in the approval process that will lead the way to the design and ultimate construction of critically needed levee improvements to the Tulsa levee system,” Rich Brierre, Executive Director of INCOG, said. “The importance of Senator Inhofe’s leadership in this effort simply cannot be overstated. Senator Inhofe was an early, tireless and vocal advocate recognizing the need, securing the funding and urging the completion of the study in a timely fashion. We also commend the work of the Tulsa District Office of the US Army Corps of Engineers and

its local sponsor Tulsa County Drainage District #12 in this milestone. The study which normally would have taken three years was completed in 18 months. Again, I want to especially thank Senator Inhofe for his leadership in this effort.”

"Tulsa District is proud of the work we have done in completing this ground breaking study quickly, which will ultimately lead to protecting the lives of many Tulsans," Col. Scott Preston, Tulsa District Commander, said.

On Tuesday, April 21, Tulsa County was also awarded a \$3 million grant from the federal Economic Development Administration to modernize two existing pump stations in the 70-year-old Tulsa-West Tulsa levee system. The grant came thanks to the leadership, support, and advocacy of Senator Inhofe to secure the funds—in 2019, none of the pump stations functioned under the pressure of the high-water event. Functioning pump stations are one more critical piece in rebuilding the entire levee system and moving the project forward.

More Information

- [Senator Inhofe press release](#)
- [Tulsa District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project specifics](#)

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