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**House approves funding for Tulsa-West Tulsa Levee System improvements**

On July 30, 2020, the Oklahoma House of Representatives unanimously passed HR 7575—the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)—which could have significant impacts on the Tulsa-West Tulsa Levee system.

“There’s a lot to be happy about in the WRDA passing,” said Rep. Hern. “Included in the bill were funds for the Army Corps of Engineers to make upgrades on the Tulsa-West Tulsa Levee System. Last year, a flood decimated parts of Tulsa. Had the aging levees failed, the devastation would have been much worse.”

The legislation includes \$133.5 million in funding to improve the levees, which were rated “unacceptable” and at “very high risk of failure” 12 years ago. Next, the legislation moves forward into the Oklahoma Senate for approval.

“I have consistently pushed for the need to address the decrepit Tulsa-West Tulsa Levee System,” said Sen. Inhofe. “Passage of this legislation in the House is a major step forward and I will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that it is passed through the Senate.”

Previous to the House passage, the Tulsa-West Tulsa Levee System was the subject of an Army Corps of Engineers “Chiefs Report” in which the Corps made formal recommendations for the necessary improvements to the system. This “Chiefs Report” followed the completion of a feasibility study that incorporated public comments regarding the identified improvements.

“I get more and more excited every time we move forward and see progress on improving our levee system,” said District 2 Tulsa County Commissioner Karen Keith. “It has taken years of effort from Senators Inhofe and Lankford, Congressman Hern and Mullen, Todd Kilpatrick our Levee Commissioner, the Corps, and so many others to get us to this point. The momentum we have now is a huge victory for the citizens and business who rely on the levees to protect them. I am looking forward to the day when the Corps can start the preconstruction and engineering design phase that this funding will kick off.”

“The news that the WRDA has been passed by the House is tremendous,” Todd Kilpatrick, District 12 Levee Commissioner, said. “Every step we make toward improving the Tulsa-West Tulsa Levee System gets Tulsans closer to being better protected from the flooding like we saw last year. We wouldn’t have gotten this far without the support of our federal delegation and the expedited work by the Tulsa Division of the Corps to complete the feasibility study that ultimately led to the signing of the Chiefs report.”

In addition to the funding potential from the WRDA, this past April Tulsa County was awarded a \$3 million grant from the federal Economic Development Administration to modernize two existing pump stations in the 70+-year-old system.

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