



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314

REPORT TO
ATTENTION OF:

DAEN-CWP-A

08 JUN 1981

Mr. Ronald C. Maynock
Building Official
Post Office Box 309
City of Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Dear Mr. Maynock:

This is in answer to your letter of 21 May 1981 concerning our Engineer Regulation 1105-2-101, Flood Damage Prevention: Level of Protection for Urban Areas.

To determine the level of protection provided by existing levees, a detailed analysis, including hydrologic and hydraulic factors as well as the condition of the present levees, would be required. The Skagit River downstream of Sedro Woolley was analyzed in 1977-79 by the Seattle District, Corps of Engineers during advance engineering and design (AE&D) studies on the authorized Levee and Channel Improvement Project. Studies indicated that the existing levee system provided about 11-year protection for downtown Mount Vernon and about 17-year protection for north and west Mount Vernon. This is far less than the Standard Project Flood level of protection. Our tentatively recommended plan would have provided Standard Project Flood Protection to downtown and north Mount Vernon and 100-year flood protection to west Mount Vernon. On 6 November 1979, Skagit County citizens defeated a proposition that would have provided the local share of the construction costs of that project, and Skagit County withdrew as local sponsor. If you need further information concerning the Skagit levee system, please contact the Seattle District Engineer: Colonel Leon K. Moraski, Post Office Box C-3755, Seattle, Washington 98124.

The reference to the one percent chance flood in our regulation is intended to assure that Corps planners and the public do not confuse needed levels of flood protection with the level of protection that the Flood Insurance Administration requires for participation in the National Flood Insurance Program. The answers to questions 27 and 49 in the attached publication explain the origin of the term "one percent chance flood." The Corps' policy is that the one percent chance flood level of protection is insufficient for flood control projects in urban areas if exceedance of the project's level of protection would have catastrophic effects. In these cases, the Corps' goal is to provide SPF level of protection. This is a goal, rather than a requirement.

Sincerely,

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1 Incl
As stated

L. H. Blakey
L. H. BLAKEY
Chief, Planning Division
Directorate of Civil Works