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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Congresswoman Anna G. Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, applauded the completion of repairs to a critical levee protecting one third of the City of East Palo Alto.

"I'm thrilled that the repairs are finished and that the residents of East Palo Alto are now better protected from catastrophic flooding," Eshoo said. "Thanks to the extraordinary effort and collaboration of city, county and state officials, the levee was repaired before real harm was done."

The levee, which protects East Palo Alto from San Francisquito Creek, was found to be seriously cracked and eroded during the severe storms of February, March and April, 2006, prompting the City to declare a local state of emergency. Local officials reported that a failure of the levee during a major storm could flood up to one third of the City, endangering the lives of residents and causing millions of dollars in property damage.

In March 2006, Eshoo responded to the damage by asking Gov. Schwarzenegger for state funds to assist the City in expediting the repairs. The Governor agreed to provide state funding to reimburse 75 percent of the City's cost to make permanent levee repairs. He also granted Eshoo's request to provide advance funding so the repair work could begin immediately.

Eshoo also sought a commitment from San Mateo County to share its technical expertise and advisors with East Palo Alto to expedite the repairs.

East Palo Alto officials said permanent repairs to the levee have been completed and engineers have certified that the levee can provide sufficient flood protection for local residents.

Eshoo is continuing to work to secure federal funding for the Army Corps of Engineers for a flood plan that will provide a solution to permanently protect all the communities along San Francisquito Creek.

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[Return to Top](#)

