

## Levee assessment ballots in mail this week

[Appeal-Democrat](#)

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South Yuba County property owners will start getting mail ballots this week that ask whether they should create an annual assessment bill for ongoing levee maintenance.

The mail election will go to those with property in the Three Rivers Levee Improvement Authority, which is in the midst of improving levees to provide stronger flood protection from the Bear, Feather and Yuba rivers.

Areas covered by the authority includes Olivehurst and Linda as well as much of Plumas Lake, which was built on land largely under water during the 1997 floods.

About 10,000 property owners will receive the ballots, and must return them at a May 12 public hearing or by mail by that date.

Results will be weighted toward those who will have to pay more under the assessment. The assessment amount is based on the proportional benefit a landowner sees from the improved levees, meaning that a homeowner in Plumas Lake who could be affected by all three rivers would pay more than a homeowner who would be affected by only one river.

The annual assessment for single-family homes would range from \$11.12 to \$148.04.

A majority of all returned ballots must vote yes on the assessment for it to pass. TRLIA officials have warned that the failure to pass a maintenance assessment could result in higher flood insurance rates for existing landowners and a moratorium on further development.

Those opposed to the assessment have said Reclamation District 784, not TRLIA, should be in charge of any maintenance assessment, and that authority officials have used questionable assumptions to arrive at their benefit assessments.