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Yuba property owners vote for levee tax

mweiser@sacbee.com

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Property owners on some of the state's most flood-prone land in Yuba County have agreed to tax themselves for levee maintenance.

The tax passed with 62 percent of ballot votes, which are weighted by property ownership. The vote-by-mail election results were tallied Wednesday by a third-party accountant hired by the Three Rivers Levee Improvement Authority, which manages levees protecting the communities of Linda, Olivehurst, Plumas Lake, and other areas of south Yuba County.

"Given these tough economic times, the results speak volumes about our community's commitment to public safety," Mary Jane Griego, chair of the levee authority, said in a statement.

About 25 percent of the 9,288 ballots were returned. Two-thirds of the ballots were held by the owners of single-family homes.

The assessment is expected to raise \$800,000 in the first year to maintain 29 miles of levees in the area. The tax ranges from \$11 to \$148 per year for single-family residential parcels.

The region has flooded several times over the past century, but the levee authority is in the process of building \$400 million in levee improvements to provide 200-year flood protection. The bigger levees are funded jointly by local and state funds.

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