

Senator Dodd to Lead Bipartisan Delegation To Research Climate Change, Flood Protections

SACRAMENTO – This week, Senator Bill Dodd (D-Napa) will lead a bipartisan delegation of state legislators, environmental and labor leaders, business executives and public policy experts to the Netherlands to examine how the Dutch are developing cutting edge water infrastructure and preparing for a steadily warming climate. The trip is organized by the California Foundation on the Environment and the Economy (CFEE), and no taxpayer funds are used.

“California will have to deal with new challenges as extreme weather patterns become commonplace,” said Senator Dodd. “We need to adapt and update our practices to reduce the risks of floods and mudslides, while also preparing for droughts and dwindling snowpacks. This will require a collaborative effort where state and local leaders come together to innovate and invest for our future. I’m eager to see how we can learn from the Netherlands, so we can ensure we’re implementing the best, most cost-effective practices here in California.”

Senator Dodd’s district includes much of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and the San Pablo Bay. In the Senate, Dodd has worked to improve safety of critical levees and improving flood control infrastructure, while restoring wetlands, which can help reduce flooding. He has worked on flood control projects going back decades. As chairman of the Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, he worked on the successful Napa River flood control project that has protected thousands of properties from flooding, restored 900 acres of environmental wetlands, and facilitated \$1 billion of investment in local businesses.

The Netherlands literally means “low-lying country,” as more than half of the landmass is either below sea level or within a foot above it. As a result, the country has had to innovate and is ground zero for exceptional water and land management techniques. As climate change triggers more intense rainfall events and rising seas, the threat of inundation has forced the Dutch to rethink flood management by implementing novel urban storm water capture techniques, as well as building smarter and more resilient dikes, levees and dams. California will also experience new pressures from extreme weather events.

The delegation will meet with water infrastructure and climate planning experts to learn how the Dutch are developing, constructing and sustaining a resilient water system. The CFEE Study Travel Project, which runs March 22-31, will consist of field visits and demonstrations, along with meetings with government officials, infrastructure experts and water managers, port authorities and municipal leaders, and environmental organizations and business leaders.

They will also tour the Port of Rotterdam, which is the busiest port in Europe, and is aggressively pursuing greater sustainability and carbon neutrality, along with a technology center in Amsterdam that produces global energy analyses and advanced technologies.

“The Port and the Technology Center each showcase novel ways that businesses can partner with environmental organizations to address climate change,” said Dr. Patrick Mason, president and CEO of CFEE. “California has long been a leader in this area, because we set ambitious climate change goals and then try to reach them at the lowest cost. By exploring the work being done in

Rotterdam and Amsterdam, I hope we can bring home more best practices for California policymakers to consider.”

An independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit, CFEE has convened state leaders to examine critical issues related to California’s environment, with a view toward building consensus around long-term solutions, to California’s biggest challenges for almost four decades. “We’re not alone in facing with these problems,” added Mason. “We’re very fortunate we can look to international examples to see how other nations are coping with climate threats. The Dutch are uniquely positioned to teach California what more we can do to prepare.”

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