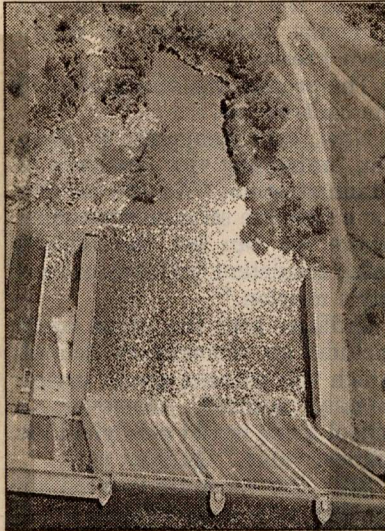


# LETTERS

Bee 1/17/99



## Flood's warning

Glued to the TV this past storm, my thoughts went back to 1955 and the terrible Christmas floods that ravaged California. Trying to return home from a Bakersfield area business trip to my home in Oakland took 10 hours of stressful driving. Highway 99 was severely flooded at all stream crossings; there were no dams on any stream or river until the Kings River crossing at Kingsburg. That bridge was the only one not having water 6 inches to 1 foot deep to traverse.

Calling the Highway Patrol in Modesto, I was advised to leave Highway 99 and take Highway 132 west to Highway 33, as the Mossdale "Y" west of Manteca on Highway 50 was under 4 to 6 feet of water.

The same situation occurred recently: early substantial snow-pack and then the infamous "Pineapple Express." The fact that most streams were dammed had little effect in controlling the flood waters. The dams did little to help Friant hatchery employees or mobile park residents at Highway 41. I have heard the song and dance so many times, "it can't happen here or will never occur again in a million years" that it makes me sick.

The only reasonable use of a river flood plain is exactly what it has been used for to date: farming or sand and gravel digging or a system of parks that would not be totally devastated by flooding.

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