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**SECTION B**

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# Concerns raised over Mati

## 150 people raise fears of flooding, increased use of area for recreation

**By Charles Levin**  
*Staff writer*

Business leaders, water agency officials and Matilija Canyon residents raised concerns Thursday over newly unveiled proposals for tearing down Matilija Dam and removing the massive load of silt behind it.

Questions about the project included flood control, the effect of silt on water quality and marine wildlife, and the possibility of diesel trucks parading through Ojai with loads of sediment.

"We've really got to be creative here," said Karen Hesli, an 18-year Matilija Canyon resident who lives near the dam. "Who's going to spend

\$200 million to take this thing down? As a taxpayer, I'm not. I really hope the means to do this have wholeness and sanity to it."

Hesli was among more than 150 people who packed the Board of Supervisors chambers for a public meeting on an ongoing \$4.2 million feasibility study.

Environmentalists, government officials and Rep. Elton Gallegly, R-Simi Valley, said the study is the best way to answer those questions.

"The issue here is not whether we should take it down or not," Gallegly said Friday from Washington, D.C. "The issue is should we find out the impact of whether it should stay

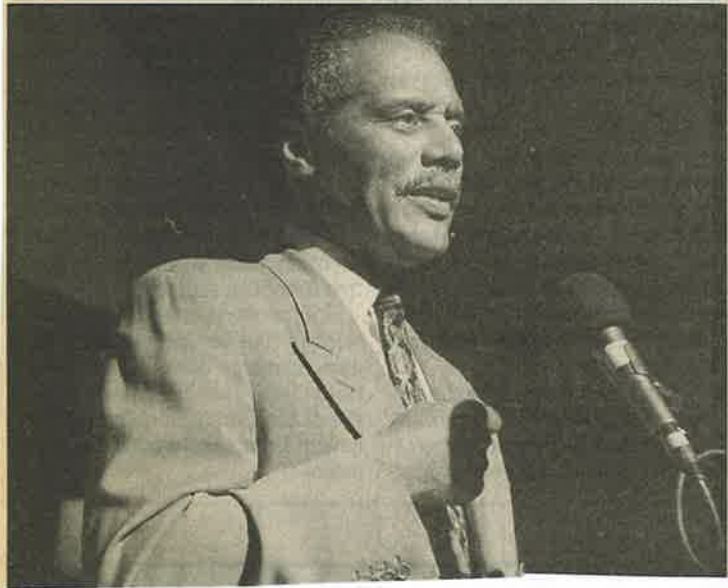
or whether it should go. That's what we're trying to determine now with the feasibility study."

Gallegly vowed to continue seeking federal money for the study, which will recommend how best to remove the dam by the summer of 2004. But Gallegly indicated that new federal budget priorities to fight terrorism might slow that effort.

"There is a possibility that it may be ratcheted back a little bit," Gallegly said of the study's due date.

The federal government provided \$523,000 for the study during the current fiscal year, said Sue Hughes, legislative analyst with the County Executive Office. The Ventura County Flood Control District is seeking \$713,000 a year of federal cash for each of the next two fiscal years.

The district and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are preparing federal and state environmental re-



# Concerns Are Raised Over Removal of Dam Large Open, Fall Evaluation of Police Chief



Parks pulled out a letter to the Police Commission announcing his request to stay on the job, and signed it on his son's back as the guests applauded.

His decision heated up an issue that has been at a slow boil for months.

On Friday, the union kept up its drumbeat of opposition.

"Chief Parks has demeaned officers so that their morale is at the lowest ebb," union leaders said in a statement.

At the same time, the union is trying to raise \$1 million to wage a formal campaign against Parks. In a letter to retired police officers Jan. 17, league President Mitzi Grasso called Parks "a disaster" and asked for donations to the campaign.

known, but today is not that day," he said.

The commission must make its decision about Parks by mid-May. The panel's decision is final unless the City Council overturns it with a vote of two-thirds, or 10 members.

On Friday, most council members refrained from offering an opinion about Parks, saying they wanted to allow the commissioners to do its job.

"This is their moment," said Councilman Jack Weiss. "The city is counting on them to be independent from politics and make the best decision on the merits."

Former police commissioners encouraged the current panel to depersonalize the process as much as possible in order to cope with the intense pressure being exerted

he was extremely about her emotional state it might affect Kira." He she felt society "looked down" on her because she had had a child out of wedlock and that she wanted to "legitimize" Kira, even though the child was 17 months old.

She said in her declaration that she was heartbroken after he insisted that she divorce him, as agreed, a month after they married. He lost interest in her, she said, when he could no longer use his money and power to control her.

The deal-breaker, according to his declaration, was her demand in September 2000 for a \$25-million trust fund. "Finally—and belatedly—I had had enough," he said. He refused, and sought the DNA test.

"By late 2000, I seriously questioned whether my paternity of Ki-

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to favor the dam's demise, the 20

# Matilija Dam money still in Bush budget

**By Ryan Alessi**  
*Star Washington bureau*

WASHINGTON — While President Bush is again asking to slash the Army Corps of Engineers' budget, local projects — including the study of the Matilija Dam — are still on the list to get money in 2003.

Bush's \$2.1 trillion budget for 2003 outlines nearly \$4.3 billion for the Army Corps of Engineers, which studies, constructs and, in some cases, removes civil works projects from waterways to dams. The corps is operating with more than \$4.5 billion in 2002.

In trimming the \$220 million, Bush wants to slice several Mississippi River projects and is not asking for any money for several other Midwestern water projects. No new water projects are included in the budget — only ongoing ones. Ventura County, however, has several projects in the works

that the president said Congress should continue to fund.

Under the 2003 proposal, the Army Corps of Engineers would receive another \$100,000 in its continuing study of how to remove the Matilija Dam from the Ventura River. Engineers have found that the dam has backed up millions of tons of sand and silt, making it virtually useless. Congress set aside \$535,000 for the 2002 leg of the study.

In addition Bush's budget includes:

- \$3.6 million for maintenance at Channel Islands Harbor.
- \$100,000 for an environmental study at Mugu Lagoon.
- \$100,000 for an erosion study along Ventura and Santa Barbara counties' shore.
- \$60,000 for maintenance at Port Hueneme.

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