Date of Hearing: May 13, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
Buffy Wicks, Chair
AB 2639 (Soria) – As Amended March 19, 2026

Policy Committee: Local Government Vote: 10 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: Yes Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the Merced County Flood Control District (District) to coordinate its flood control planning and response operations with other local agencies located completely or partially in Merced County, including, but not limited to, cities and districts with responsibilities for surface water management or flood control.

FISCAL EFFECT:

No state costs. Local costs of an unknown amount, but likely significant, in excess of $150,000, to the District, Merced County, and local agencies located completely or partially within the county for staff to coordinate flood control planning and response operations. The bill does not specify, but specific tasks may include interagency coordination though joint meetings, sharing data and documentation, soliciting input from impacted agencies, providing training, preparing joint reports, or other coordinating efforts.

Merced County contains six incorporated cities, numerous unincorporated communities and towns, and several relevant special districts.

These costs are reimbursable by the state, subject to a determination by the Commission on State Mandates.

The Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of General Fund structural deficits of around $35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

COMMENTS:

1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

> The Merced Flood Control District was established through legislation in 1982 to receive and manage funds for flood management in Merced County. While this legislation gave the County of Merced the power to establish a separate flood control district, they have instead operated as the acting Merced Flood Control District under the authority provided by that legislation. However, the County is not the only local entity concerned with flood control within its boundaries.
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> In addition to the County, Merced Irrigation District and the various cities in Merced's primary flood zones also manage waterways and

> undertake flood management projects relevant to the region. [This bill] simply directs the Merced Flood Control District to coordinate with entities like these when conducting their flood control and management functions.

2) **Background.** ***Merced County Flood Control District.*** AB 2926 (Thurman), Chapter 1311, Statutes of 1982, created the countywide district under the District Act. The District is tasked with controlling flood and storm waters in the District and protecting the watersheds, harbors, public highways, life, and property in the District from flood and storm water damage. The District is a dependent district where the Board of Supervisors serves as ex officio members of the governing board.

   Merced Regional Flood Control. According to the 2018 Merced Integrated Regional Water Management Plan Update:

   > Flooding in the Region is typically caused by infrequent, severe winter storms, combined with snowmelt runoff from the foothills east of Merced County. Runoff from these storm events traverses the Region via numerous creeks and rivers, ultimately draining to the San Joaquin River. The relatively flat topography of the Planning Area causes floodwaters exceeding the banks of these rivers and streams to spread out over large areas.
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   > The Merced Region has a long history of active stormwater and flood management, dating back to development of the original Merced County Streams Group project under authorization of the Flood Control Act of 1944 as part of the comprehensive plan for flood control for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins.
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   > According to FEMA, approximately 380,000 acres in Merced County are located within a 100-year floodplain. A significant component of flooding in urban areas appears to be caused by flow over the southern and/or northern banks of Bear Creek, around the confluence of Black Rascal Creek with Bear Creek. In the unincorporated areas, Miles Creek can overflow its banks to flood portions of Planada, which is exacerbated when Bear Creek overflows into Miles Creek. Mariposa Creek overflow impacts the community of Le Grand.

   In January 2023, hundreds of households were affected in Planada, an unincorporated area of Merced County, when floodwaters breached the banks of nearby Miles Creek. According to a University of California of Merced, "Over seven hundred Planada households experienced economic losses following a major flood disaster on January 9, 2023. These losses ranged from property damage inside the home to outside of the home and the loss of work."

   The author asserts this bill will help protect the residents of Merced County from flooding.

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