FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla.

With hurricane season approaching, Gov. Jeb Bush on Tuesday urged an immediate federal response to a new report warning that the dike surrounding Lake Okeechobee is in extreme danger of failing and devastating South Florida's environment, economy and quality of life.

If the levee breached, it could rival Hurricane Katrina's effect on New Orleans by flooding the surrounding region, risking the lives of 40,000 people and threatening urban water supplies to the southeast, the report predicts.

Although state officials say they're hurriedly updating an evacuation plan for the region, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers insisted that the earthen levee it built more than 70 years ago remained safe and that work was underway to make it safer.

The grim outlook for the Herbert Hoover Dike is the focus of a nearly $300,000 report by engineering consultants for the South Florida Water Management District. Officials sought the review in January after two years of destructive hurricanes, and concerns raised by community leaders.

"There are serious problems with the dike," Bush said. "If a hurricane were to hit, there'd be a one-in-six chance of a breach. There needs to be a commitment to fortify the dike, and there needs to be a revision to our evacuation plans for the region."

In a letter to the Army Corps on Friday, the governor asked for nine measures to stave off disaster, including speeding up repairs in progress, daily inspections of the dike, and keeping the lake at lower levels during hurricane season.

Bush's words nearly echoed those in the 78-page report, which concludes that the dike "poses a grave and imminent danger to the people and the environment of South Florida. ... The basic problem is simple. Certain geologic formations that underlie the dike, and portions of the material that comprise it, bear a striking resemblance to Swiss cheese."