



# Montara Water & Sanitary District

Serving the Communities of Montara and Moss Beach

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March 25, 2025

Alan Moss  
Property Owner  
86 San Lucas Avenue  
Moss Beach, CA 94038

Carol Guion  
Property Owner  
89 San Lucas Avenue  
Moss Beach, CA 94038

Re: Impacts of recent land movement in Seal Cove Critical Geotechnical Hazards Area on water and sewer service

Dear Property Owner,

The Montara Water and Sanitary District (MWSD) has been made aware of recent increased land movement affecting roads, and our water and sewer infrastructure in the Seal Cove Critical Geotechnical Hazards Area, specifically along the Geologic Hazard Zones within 100 feet of the coastal bluff.

Since mid-February, MWSD has responded to 10 water leaks and repaired 8 water leaks on either a District water main or individual property water connections near San Lucas Avenue and Ocean Avenue. This is a clear indication of additional land movement. Further, staff are aware of leaks and damage to PG&E gas and electric infrastructure, at least four sewer issues (separations or pump failures) on private sewer assets, as well as open fissures and settling in street surfaces.

We are working to cap the water main in San Lucas at the Del Mar intersection. District staff plan to reroute this water main to maintain water supply to the nearby fire hydrant, and to connect into the water main on Del Mar. MWSD has also taken immediate action to inspect our sewer mains to confirm no breaks are allowing untreated sewage into the soils or coastal environment.

To maintain water service to your properties, MWSD staff have assisted in providing you above ground water service connections to either an adjacent neighboring property willing to allow a hose bib connection or via adjacent District water mains. MWSD has also delivered bottled water to your property during this emergency.

Above ground water connections to your property provide a safer water service connection by providing you visual access to your water service line and eliminates the need for District or contractor staff to excavate in unstable soils. MWSD has further been informed by San Mateo County that the road closure

of San Lucas Avenue from Del Mar Avenue to Ocean Boulevard, also bars excavation permits for any District work in this closed area.

Seal Cove is an area of documented geologic hazard zones and land movement. In the late 1960's, the U.S. Geological Survey slowed Seal Cove development due to active landsliding and accelerated coastal erosion. San Mateo County froze building construction and authorized a detailed geologic study of the area intended to provide guidelines for future development. The geologic study, completed in 1971, confirmed active landsliding, faulting, and seacliff erosion, and outlined requirements for development in some areas of Seal Cove. Some residential single family home development continued.

In 1980, the County once again commissioned a geologic study and confirmed continued instability and geologic hazards, including approximately 17 homes that had suffered some form of structural damage due to landslide activity. The report further identified 3 geologic hazard zones. Risk for these areas was outlined in the report, including active hazards in Zone 1:

*Zone 1 Risk Assessment – UNSTABLE; Risk to development in this zone is considered to be extremely high. It is reasonable to conclude that slow progressive landsliding and seacliff retreat will continue, resulting in structural and property damage. This is especially true for structures or utilities located astride active surface breaks. Rapid catastrophic slope failure of the high, steep portion of the seacliff located west of Ocean Boulevard is a clear probability. Such an event could involve the loss of life as well as significant property damage. The feasibility of reducing the risk to acceptable levels is extremely low. No additional development should be allowed in this zone.*

As part of our responsibility to maintain safe and reliable infrastructure, MWSD has been monitoring the stability of service lines in this known area of geologic hazard. Your property is located in a hazardous zone where ongoing ground movement and erosion pose a serious risk to water and sewer infrastructure. Continued operation of water or sewer service lines in these conditions could lead to:

- Pipeline failures and service interruptions
- Sinkholes or further land destabilization
- Potential environmental contamination from leaks

Given these risks to infrastructure and to MWSD staff working in a geologically active area, MWSD is evaluating the need to cap or relocate additional water mains and sewer mains outside of the geologic hazard zones. This may require property owners to relocate their service connections, maintain above ground service connections, or potentially relocate sump and sewer pumps.

If conditions worsen or if infrastructure is deemed unsafe, MWSD may be required to disconnect or modify service lines to protect public safety and the integrity of the water and sewer systems. The high likelihood of increased leaks and damage to District water and sewer pipelines is unsustainable, and contrary to our mission to protect public health and the environment.

District staff have been actively working with San Mateo County and Coastside Fire Protection District to alert them to these new leaks and land movement. We continue to work with San Mateo County to follow their guidance regarding access and building safety. We have also expressed our concern that the County seek funding opportunities which can support impacted residents.

We understand that this situation may be unsettling and raise concerns for you. We want to work closely with affected property owners to explore potential solutions, including service line relocation or reinforcement where feasible. Please feel free to contact MWSD to discuss your specific property.

For more information or to schedule a meeting with MWSD staff, please contact Clemens Heldmaier at 650-766-6982 or via email at [clemens@mwsd.net](mailto:clemens@mwsd.net).

We appreciate your cooperation as we navigate these challenges and prioritize community safety.