



# Montara Water & Sanitary District

Serving the Communities of Montara and Moss Beach

P.O. Box 370131

Tel: (650) 728-3545

8888 Cabrillo Highway

Fax: (650) 728-8556

Montara, CA 94037-0131

E-mail: [mwsd@coastside.net](mailto:mwsd@coastside.net)

Visit Our Web Site: <http://www.mwsd.montara.com>

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March 4, 2025

Director Dina El-Tawansy  
District 4  
California Department of Transportation  
P.O. Box 23660, MS-11  
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Mark L. Weaver, Deputy District Director  
Right of Way and Lands Surveys  
California Department of Transportation  
P.O. Box 23660, MS-11  
Oakland, CA 94623-066

Re: Continued Extreme Fire Danger of Unmaintained Caltrans Right of Way in Montara

Ms. El-Tawansy, Mr. Weaver:

Over three years ago in July 2021, Montara Water & Sanitary District (MWSD) contacted Mr. Weaver on behalf of our community regarding hazardous conditions on Caltrans property within Montara, California. This outreach was necessary due to high fuel loads from vegetation and heavy tree growth within this unused and unmaintained property.

Unfortunately, despite some minimal fire clearance work in September 2021, we find our community facing almost the exact same hazards today in 2025.

The Montara Bypass Lands, originally planned for the Devils Slides Bypass, are unused, vacant, unmaintained and a critical fire danger to adjacent homes and the critical local watershed which supplies all of our community's water. Further, this land is adjacent to the undeveloped 3,858-acre Golden Gate National Recreation Area Rancho Corral de Tierra where uncontrolled fire ignitions could consume the entire coastal mountain range. Caltrans does not have any documented plans for use of

this property and clearly no active maintenance, fuel reduction, or risk mitigation program in place to protect our community.

**What we see is that you just let trees and vegetation grow. Uncontrolled, unmaintained.**

MWSD has long advocated for resolution of this property. In 2021, we proactively sought cost estimates for fire reduction work and in prior years, due to extreme fire danger, we actually cleaned the parcel at our community's expense. We once again are prepared today to address the fire hazards on this parcel, however as a parcel owned and maintained by MWSD. **We ask that Caltrans transfer the property to MWSD.**

**Our community is frightened.** We have seen the devastation of fires in Paradise, Santa Rosa, Lahaina, and now in Pacific Palisades and Altadena. We see evidence of this extreme fire hazard in our backyards and our critical watershed. The State is facing billions in emergency funding to address the impacts of the Los Angeles fires, but we cannot find the will or funding to address hazards in San Mateo County that can produce the same results.

A fire on this property will not only damage homes, but the storage and plumbing of our community owned water system. A fire here will introduce debris, erosion and toxins into critical coastal ecosystems, the watersheds that provide our drinking water, our community water distribution and sewer collection systems, as well as private and community groundwater wells. These impacts will also be felt on our coastline, and throughout the protected Montara State Marine and Fitzgerald Marine Reserves.

We ask that you respond to us with your immediate plan to eliminate this fire hazard and appropriately plan for a permanent solution to this community hazard.

**We know how to keep our community safe. Transfer this property to MWSD, a responsible land owner who knows how to address this fire risk. Stop the just letting the trees grow.**

Sincerely,



President Scott Boyd

On behalf of the Montara Water and Sanitary District Board of Directors

Director Kathryn Slater-Carter

Director Bill Softky

Director Carlisle Ann (Cid) Young

Director Peter Dekker

cc: *Via electronic transmission*  
CA State Assemblymember Kevin Mullin  
CA State Senator Josh Becker

**County of San Mateo Board of Supervisors:**

**President David J. Canepa**

**Vice President Noelia Corzo**

**Supervisor Lisa Gauthier**

**Supervisor Ray Mueller**

**Supervisor Jackie Speier**

**Lennie Roberts, Committee for Green Foothills**

**Steve Monowitz, San Mateo County Planning**

**Dan Carl, Isobel Cooper, California Coastal Commission**

**Coastal Conservancy**

**Rob Bartoli, San Mateo Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo)**

**Midcoast Community Council**

**Red Alert Montara Moss Beach (RAMMB)**