

MONTEREY COUNTY

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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Media Advisory

Portions of the Big Sur Community face long-term Isolation

The County of Monterey Department of Emergency Management in conjunction with the Monterey County Sheriff's Office, Big Sur Fire Department, the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, and the Big Sur community are working on a plan to meet the needs of residents that are essentially cut-off from vital services due to multiple landslides on State Highway 1.

In meetings with the County Department of Emergency Management team over the last two days, Caltrans shared information regarding the closure of the Highway 1 due to slides at three locations. These slide areas include Paul's Slide (Postmile 22 in Monterey County), the Mill Creek slide (PM 18 in Mon. Co.), and the Polar Star slide (San Luis Obispo County, 24 miles south of Mill Creek).

Paul's Slide has once again accelerated in response to the recent heavy rainfall. It is unpredictable and the slope continues to adjust as the slide moves, causing material to flow and rocks to roll into the roadway.

At Mill Creek, the saturated and over steepened slope is on the edge of stability and appears to be approaching failure.

At Polar Star, rocks and soil are constantly falling from the temporary cut that was made at the base in order to gain access for crews and equipment to remove the slide material and correct drainage. The failure of the over steepened rock material could occur at any time.

Currently there is no safe access through Paul's Slide, Mill Creek, or Polar Star, effectively isolating the Big Sur coast between the Polar Star slide, just south of Ragged Point to and through Paul's Slide.

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Caltrans will be leading convoys of residents impacted by the slides by the HWY 1 slide closure north of Paul's slide interior locked gate at mile marker 22.5 to the north of the outer closure at mile marker 32.35. Convoy scheduled for Tuesday & Friday at 8:00 am, 12 noon, and 4:00 pm.

Residents that are impacted by slides on HWY 1, between the Pauls slide and the Mill Creek slide are able to use Nacimiento Fergusson Road on an emergency basis. Residents south of the Mill Creek slide are not able to reach Nacimiento Fergusson Road. The County, State, Big Sur Fire and local collaborators are developing a plan to insure basic needs are met for all residents remaining in the effected areas.

"Our concern is that this is going to be a prolonged closure and our top priority is making sure people have access to essential services," said Tracy Molfino, interim manager of the Monterey Department of Emergency Management.

The County's public information office is working to establish open lines of communications with community groups to ensure people get access to vital information. "The County is committed to providing timely and accurate information to the residents and businesses in Big Sur to help manage this difficult situation," said Nick Pasculli, Chief Public Information Officer.

The County will utilize social media and email communications as well as the county's website to push information out to this community.

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