



JOHN CRUIKSHANK, MAYOR  
ERIC ALEGRIA, MAYOR PRO TEM  
BARBARA FERRARO, COUNCILMEMBER  
DAVID L. BRADLEY, COUNCILMEMBER  
PAUL SEO, COUNCILMEMBER

July 31, 2024

Via Email

Deanne Criswell  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
P.O. Box 10055  
Hyattsville, MD 20782-8055

Nancy Ward  
California Governor's Office of Emergency Services  
3650 Schriever Avenue  
Mather, CA 95655

**SUBJECT: Request for Individual Assistance for Residents Impacted by Accelerated Movement in Portuguese Bend Landslide Complex**

Dear Director Criswell and Director Ward,

The City of Rancho Palos Verdes, California thanks you for your attention to our community's ongoing crisis in the Greater Portuguese Bend Landslide Complex following California's recent heavy rainy seasons, including severe winter storms from January 31-February 9, 2024 (Disaster No. DR-4769-CA).

As you know, heavy stormwater infiltration from these severe storms has fueled the landslide, which is accelerating at an unprecedented rate of 9 to 12 inches per **week** (depending on the location). This crisis has damaged homes, roads, and utilities, and resulted in the closure of over 10 miles of popular trails, two public beaches, and the emergency disassembly of Wayfarers Chapel, a National Historic Landmark.

**Most notably, on July 29, 2024, gas line damage in the Portuguese Bend Community of Rancho Palos Verdes required SoCalGas to indefinitely shut off natural gas service to approximately 135 homes and with fewer than 3 days' notice. Other utilities ranging from SCE to CalWater are also experiencing significant infrastructure damage in a landscape that shifts from day to day. On July 30, 2024, SCE notified residents that there may be a potential to cut off service to approximately 525 homes in 3 neighborhoods. The sheer scale of this landslide and the damage it is inflicting on hundreds of homes and thousands of residents is best understood with a site visit. Therefore, we wish to invite your office, as well as the Governor, to tour the site with us at soon as possible.**

In response to Disaster No. DR-4769-CA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) made its Public Assistance Program available to the City and two geological hazard abatement districts to help their efforts to slow down the landslides. Additionally, the U.S. Small Business

Administration offered low-interest loans to homeowners, businesses, and nonprofits that suffered property damage or economic loss.

While the City greatly appreciates this support, we are writing today to urgently request individual assistance, in the form of grants, be made available to the hundreds of homeowners whose properties are increasingly threatened by this disaster.

Since the storms, the landslide complex has expanded from 380 to 680 acres in recent months — a 79% increase. Over 1 square mile of land is sliding toward the ocean. Since June 2023, two homes in the landslide complex have been deemed uninhabitable. However, an untold number are experiencing significant damage. Roadway access is becoming increasingly difficult in some neighborhoods. As a result, the City anticipates additional properties may be deemed uninhabitable in the coming weeks and months, which would displace residents.

The City is finding temporary solutions to help homeowners stabilize and level their houses through this emergency. This includes bridging separating rooflines and providing alternative foundations that may move with the shifting land. We are exploring expanding the permissible use of temporary housing, such as manufactured homes, in the landslide complex while repairs are made to permanent homes so they can be salvaged. Additionally, the City is identifying emergency sheltering options, if needed.

Residents in the landslide area need all the help they can get from every branch of government, and they need it quickly. Given the urgency of this worsening situation, we request FEMA make additional individual assistance, such as the Individuals and Households Program (IHP), and/or any other possible options, available as soon as possible. We also request collaboration with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) to identify state resources to bolster individual assistance, such as grants.

We need your support now to help residents whose lives are being upended by this evolving emergency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' and 'M' followed by a horizontal line.

**Ara Mihranian**  
City Manager

cc: Robert Fenton, Jr., Administrator, FEMA Region 9  
Laphonza Butler, U.S. Senator, California  
Alex Padilla, U.S. Senator, California  
Ted Lieu, U.S. Representative, 36th Congressional District  
Ben Allen, Senator, 24th State Senate District  
Al Muratsuchi, Assemblymember, 66th Assembly District  
Janice Hahn, L.A. County Supervisor, 4th District  
Kevin McGowan, Director, L.A. County Office of Emergency Management  
Brandy Villanueva, Disaster Manager Area Coordinator, L.A. County Area G  
Rancho Palos Verdes City Council  
Catherine Jun, Rancho Palos Verdes Deputy City Manager

Attachments enclosed on page 3.

#### ATTACHMENTS:

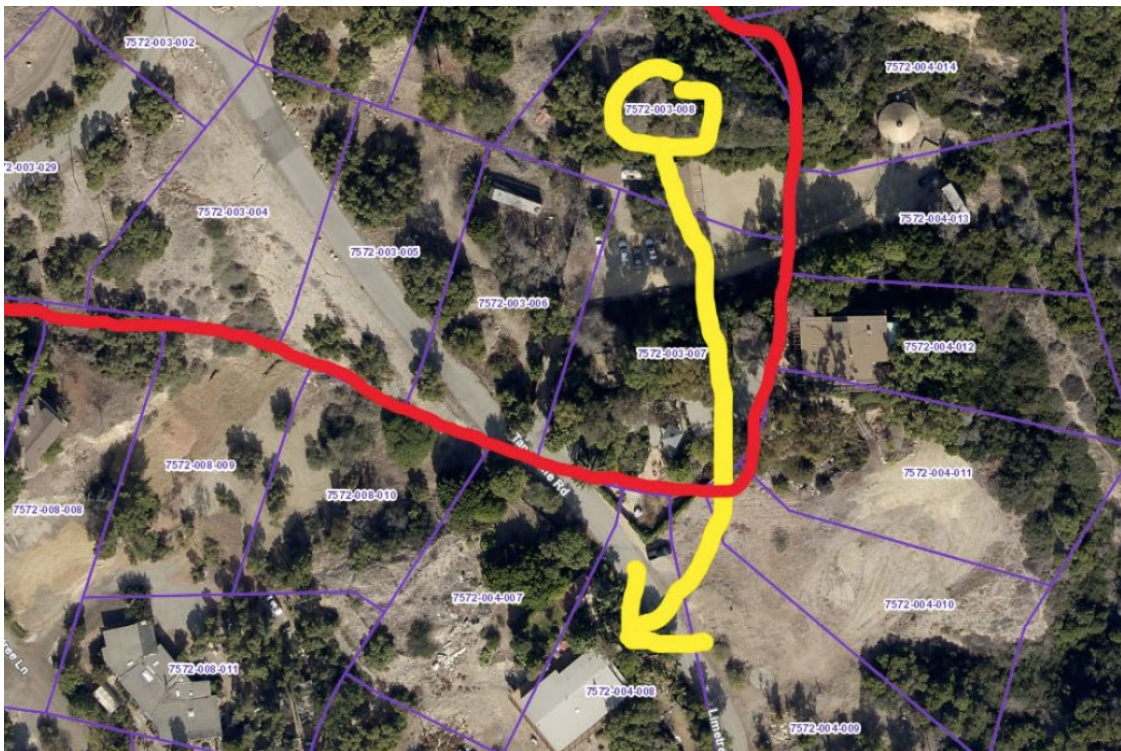
1. One example of Seaview, a severely impacted neighborhood, experiencing significant damage to infrastructure, homes, and utilities. Previously, the street and homes were level, but are now on radically separate planes.







(Source: LA Times – Significant, ongoing landslide damage has necessitated the de-construction and off-site storage of the historic landmark, Wayfarers Chapel, until a new location can be found.)



(Source: LA Times – The ongoing landslide has created unusual movement (and damage) of homes shifting over multiple parcels and roads. Aerial imagery shows how far one house has moved from its original parcel.)

## 2. Los Angeles Times Article on SoCalGas' sudden shut off of natural gas service to 135 homes on July 29, 2024:

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-07-28/this-coast-on-the-move-means-gas-breaks>