

## Rancho Palos Verdes Bans Homes on Landslide Coast

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The City Council of Rancho Palos Verdes, California, has formally approved an ordinance that permanently prohibits new residential construction in a section of the Portuguese Bend Landslide Complex, a stretch of coastline south of Los Angeles known for its cliffs and unstable terrain. The measure aims to safeguard public safety amid ongoing geological instability.

The affected area spans between the Point Vicente Lighthouse and the city of San Pedro. In recent years, landslides have repeatedly disrupted roadways, damaged homes, and forced evacuations. Officials reported that in early February 2025, land was sliding toward the ocean at a rate of four inches per week. A city landslide report indicates that approximately 140 homes have been destroyed or displaced, with over 8.5 million square feet of coastal land impacted.

City officials cited persistent rainfall over the past five years as a contributing factor, which saturated the soil and destabilized the hillside. The new ordinance not only bans ground-up construction but also revokes permits for previously approved but unbuilt structures. It also

restricts additions or replacements of existing on-site infrastructure, including swimming pools.

The ordinance, which was formally passed on August 19, will take effect on September 18. The city had implemented a temporary construction pause in October 2023, reported the Daily Breeze, which is now codified into this permanent measure. Additional parcels, including portions of the Portuguese Bend Beach Club, are now included in the ban.

At an August 5 council meeting, Mayor Pro Tem Paul Seo emphasized the decision prioritizes “public safety and well-being for the people on that land,” according to local reports. The city’s actions reflect a proactive approach to mitigate risks from an area with a history of landslide activity, which has destroyed neighborhoods in the past.

This section of the Palos Verdes Peninsula has long been vulnerable to landslides. Nearly a century ago, an entire cliffside community was swept into the ocean, and remnants of the disrupted roadways remain visible today. The new ordinance aims to prevent similar disasters while ensuring the safety of current residents.

The measure highlights growing attention to geological hazards along California’s coastline, balancing property development with long-term public safety considerations. Residents and potential developers are advised to comply with the new rules, which represent a permanent restriction on construction in one of the state’s most geologically active coastal zones.