

# BOLINAS COMMUNITY PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT

BCPUD

BOX 390 270 ELM ROAD BOLINAS CALIFORNIA 94924

415 868 1224



October 14, 2008

## Re: Community Alert Regarding Terrace Avenue at Surfer's Overlook – Why You Need To Act

Dear Bolinas Community Resident:

On behalf of the Bolinas Community Public Utility District (“BCPUD”) and the Bolinas Fire Protection District (“BFPD”), we are writing to inform you about important recent developments regarding Terrace Avenue at Surfer’s Overlook. Briefly stated, **Terrace Avenue is in an extremely precarious condition at this location and may fail as early as THIS winter if immediate action is not taken by the County of Marin to preserve and protect this vital County road.** A geotechnical report prepared for the County of Marin’s Department of Public Works by Salem Howes Associates (dated September 1, 2004) determined that “cliff retreat at Surfer’s Overlook is due to wave erosion at the toe and wind/rain erosion of the face” of the cliff. At present, the seawall below Terrace Avenue at the toe of Surfer’s Overlook (a seawall the County installed years ago) is failing and in critical need of repair prior to the onset of the winter storms. Our districts and many Bolinas residents began advising the County of Marin about the condition of this seawall more than two years ago and, until recently, we believed the County would undertake the necessary repairs of its facility. However, our districts have received a notice from the County of Marin’s Department of Public Works (“DPW”) recommending that the County “take no measures to attempt to maintain, reinforce or replace the [sea]wall” despite DPW’s own acknowledgement that the wall “needs to be replaced” and “the failure of this wall will ultimately hasten the loss of Terrace Avenue at this location.” (quoted from a memorandum written by the DPW’s Chief Assistant Director, Bob Beaumont, on September 1, 2008).

If you do not live in the immediate vicinity of Terrace Avenue at Surfer’s Overlook, you may be thinking, “why am I receiving this letter? Nothing about Terrace Avenue at Surfer’s Overlook affects me, I don’t even drive on Terrace Avenue.” The purpose of this letter is to advise you that nothing could be further from the truth: in fact, ***you and our entire community will be at risk in an emergency and you will be directly financially affected if the County persists in its refusal to protect this important County road.*** Here are the facts:

1. Terrace Avenue is a vital community thoroughfare and is one of only two access/egress roads off the Bolinas Mesa, where the majority of Bolinas residents reside and through which thousands of visitors pass each year to visit the Point Reyes National Seashore;
2. The other access/egress road for the Bolinas Mesa – Mesa Road – is vulnerable to periodic closure due to, among other things, vehicle accidents, falling trees and limbs, and/or downed power lines;
3. The failure of Terrace Avenue at Surfer’s Overlook will leave the Bolinas community and visitors with only one access/egress road for the Bolinas Mesa (i.e., Mesa Road) and, given the demonstrated vulnerability of Mesa Road to periodic closures, the loss of Terrace Avenue as the only other access/egress road off of the Bolinas Mesa presents an unacceptable risk to everyone’s safety during an emergency event, such as a fire;
4. Contrary to the local myth about “Spring Road”, there is no alternative access/egress road or public right-of-way or easement available for emergency or public use if Terrace Avenue

were to fail; it is likely that it would be very time-consuming (possibly five to ten years) and quite costly to pursue an alternate route – moreover, there is no certainty that an alternate route is achievable.

5. The BCPUD has both a water main and a sewer main under sections of Terrace Avenue, including but not limited to the portion of Terrace Avenue at Surfer's Overlook, and the continued degradation and/or loss of Terrace Avenue at Surfer's Overlook will require the BCPUD to relocate its existing water and sewer mains at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars to the customers of the BCPUD;

6. If Terrace Avenue should fail at this location *before* the BCPUD can relocate its water and sewer mains, a substantial portion of Bolinas residents (including the entirety of the Little Mesa) will be without water service and all of the properties on the sewer system above this point on the collection system would be without sewer service (as well as water service) for an indefinite period of time.

The members of our districts' Boards of Directors believe that the recommendation by the Department of Public Works' not to repair its seawall below Terrace Avenue is irresponsible and tantamount to a recommendation that the County of Marin not fulfill its responsibilities to all of us as taxpayers of Marin County. As noted above, *the County's failure to act will result in directly foreseeable and significant costs to you (for the relocation of existing water and sewer mains) and risks to your safety (due to the loss of a vital access/egress road)*. Our Boards are taking steps (including the passage of urgent resolutions) to demand immediate action from the County to repair the seawall and commence a planning process to design and implement the necessary protective measures to permanently preserve Terrace Avenue at Surfer's Overlook. However, WE NEED YOUR HELP.

Please take a few moments either to write an e-mail or pick up the phone to call your Marin County Supervisor Steve Kinsey and urge him to work on our behalf to preserve and protect Terrace Avenue. **The first step should be to urge Supervisor Kinsey to take all necessary action to direct DPW personnel to repair the County seawall below Surfer's Overlook immediately.** This action alone is relatively inexpensive, can be done quickly and will enable a thoughtful planning process to be conducted to develop a long-term solution to this problem. If you send an e-mail, it would be useful to copy the other supervisors on the Marin County Board so that they are aware of your concerns. *The enclosed insert provides the contact information you need for Supervisor Kinsey and his fellow supervisors.* Please also talk with your neighbors and consider organizing a group to attend a Marin County Board of Supervisors' meeting to make your concerns known. Our local Boards have been and will continue to discuss the Terrace Avenue situation and will continue to insist on a resolution to this problem. Please come to our meetings to learn more about what you can do as a Bolinas resident and taxpayer of Marin to demand action. We appreciate your attention to this vital community issue.

Very truly yours,

Jennifer Blackman  
General Manager  
Bolinas Community Public Utility District

Anita Tyrell-Brown  
Fire Chief  
Bolinas Fire Protection District

Please take a few moments either to write an e-mail or pick up the phone to call your Marin County Supervisor Steve Kinsey and urge him to take all necessary action to direct DPW personnel to ***repair the County seawall below Surfer's Overlook on Terrace Avenue immediately***. This action is a necessary first step to enable a thoughtful planning process for a long-term solution to save Terrace Avenue. If you send an e-mail, please copy the other supervisors on the Marin County Board so that they are aware of your concerns.

Contact information for the Marin County Board of Supervisors is listed below:

**Supervisor Steve Kinsey – phone: (415) 499-7331, fax: 499-3645, e-mail: [skinsey@co.marin.ca.us](mailto:skinsey@co.marin.ca.us)**

**Supervisor Susan Adams – phone: (415) 499-7331, fax: 499-3645, e-mail: [sadams@co.marin.ca.us](mailto:sadams@co.marin.ca.us)**

**Supervisor Harold Brown – phone: (415) 499-7331, fax: 499-3645, e-mail: [hbrown@co.marin.ca.us](mailto:hbrown@co.marin.ca.us)**

**Supervisor Charles McGlashan – phone: (415) 499-7331, fax 499-3645, e-mail: [cmcglashan@co.marin.ca.us](mailto:cmcglashan@co.marin.ca.us)**

**Supervisor Judy Arnold – phone: (415) 499-7331, fax: 499-3645, e-mail: [jarnold@co.marin.ca.us](mailto:jarnold@co.marin.ca.us)**