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After 3-year wait, Highway 1 finally reopens

■ Do we hear angels singing?

By MARY SCHLEY and KELLY NIX

TWO YEARS since it sent many cubic tons of rocks, dirt and debris cascading onto Highway 1 in Big Sur, the Regent's Slide was cleared and the highway reopened Wednesday to great celebration, with Gov. Gavin Newsom heralding the moment. The event marked three years

to the day since drivers were last able to travel the expanse between Carmel and Cambria.

"This reopening will bring much-needed relief to small businesses and families in Big Sur and the surrounding communities who have shown remarkable resilience and strength," Newsom said, considering slides in various locations have kept the highway impassible since Jan. 15, 2023, making the closure of the Big Sur coastal route the longest in the road's history.



PHOTO/CALTRANS

An aerial view of the newly reopened section of Highway 1 in Big Sur. For the first time in three years, motorists can drive the world-famous through route from Carmel to Cambria. The closure is the longest in the road's history.

Ahead of schedule

"I'm grateful to Caltrans crews for delivering Highway 1 ahead of schedule — deploying remotely controlled heavy equipment, stabilizing slopes with thousands of steel reinforcements drilled up to 60 feet deep, and using cutting-edge monitoring systems to overcome extraordinary geological challenges," Newsom continued. "This vital corridor is the gateway to California's coast and the lifeblood of the Big Sur economy — and today it's restored."

Since Regent's Slide occurred during heavy winter rains on Feb. 9, 2024, crews hired by Caltrans had worked during daylight hours seven days a week as weather and site conditions allowed, spokesman Kevin Drabinski said this week, facing increasingly challenging conditions as the land above the original slide began to shift. For safety

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Council says let there be water

By MARY SCHLEY

THE CARMEL City Council unanimously voted Monday to join local government agencies in calling for an end to the state's moratorium on new Cal Am water hookups.

An order issued years ago by the State Water Resources Control Board forbids the installation of water meters on undeveloped lots, "which limits new development in the region, including affordable housing," acting city administrator Brandon Swanson told the council in his Jan. 12 report. But with Monterey One Water and the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District proclaiming there's ample supply from the expansion of their Pure Water Monterey recycling project — and committing allocations to Peninsula cities as a result — the hookup moratorium should end, according to Swanson and other officials.

Call for end to ban on new water meters

"The Monterey Peninsula Water Management District is actively working to rescind the moratorium on setting new water meters," Swanson explained, adding that water district GM Dave Stoldt "has requested that the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea provide a formal letter of support for this effort."

For housing

Addressed to Juliet Christian-Smith, deputy director of water rights for the state water board, the letter signed by Swanson and Mayor Dale Byrne asks officials "to allow the Monterey Peninsula to increase its much-needed housing requirements and experience modest economic development" by lifting the moratorium.

"The Pure Water Monterey project, which came online in 2021, coupled with the Monterey Peninsula's longstanding commitment to water-wise conservation strategies for both commercial and residential water consumption, have resulted in California American Water not exceeding the legal amount of water available from the Carmel River for the past four years," the letter says. "With the addition of the Pure Water Monterey Expansion project coming online, there is no threat of Cal Am exceeding legal limits in the foreseeable future."

The letter states the California Public Utilities Commission confirmed as much in an Aug. 14, 2025, decision,

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CHP NAMES DRIVER IN P.B. CYCLIST'S DEATH

By MARY SCHLEY

THE WOMAN involved in the Dec. 5, 2025, crash on 17 Mile Drive that killed avid cyclist and Cal State University Monterey Bay professor Seth Pollack has been identified as 62-year-old Pebble Beach resident Dana Lauchlan, the California Highway Patrol revealed this week. In earlier reports, the agency had withheld the driver's name.

The CHP, which is responsible for traffic enforcement in Del Monte Forest and is investigating the fatal crash at 17 Mile Drive and Crespi Lane, originally blamed Pollack for the accident. According to a report provided by CHP officer Jaskaran Bhauria soon after the crash, Pollack, 66, was cycling westbound on Crespi Lane as Lauchlan was

turning left onto the street from southbound 17 Mile Drive in her 2011 Toyota SUV, and "for reasons still under investigation, the rider of the bicycle crossed into the eastbound lane and crashed into the Toyota SUV."

Surveillance footage

But footage from a camera on a nearby house shows that is not what happened. While grainy, the video depicts the driver approaching Pollack on 17 Mile Drive and then turning left onto Crespi, directly into the path of the cyclist, who was riding straight ahead and had the right of way. The car strikes him, his bicycle flies up in the air, and Pollack lands on top of Lauchlan's SUV.

The highway patrol reported Pollack was declared dead at the scene and that Lauchlan was transported to the hospital "for suspected possible injuries." The officer also

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Newsom's rosy outlook at odds with budget analyst's view

■ Revving economy boosting revenue

GOV. GAVIN Newsom and his administration donned their rose-colored glasses Friday and presented a 2026-2027 budget with a much more sanguine outlook than the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office is projecting.

Unlike in years past, Newsom didn't present the budget himself. Instead, he sent his finance director, Joe

IN THE march toward implementing a standardized address system — ending the city's tradition of using cute, directional addresses that are not recognized by the U.S. Postal Services, utility companies and other entities — Carmel city officials this week launched an interactive map showing how a numbering system would work. The exercise allows residents to see what a standardized system could look like and invites them to provide feedback on glitches and other issues.

Subject to revision

"This draft map represents the addressing system proposed to the city council. The publishing of this draft map is meant to be used as a tool to familiarize the community with the proposed numbered addresses system," the city announced Tuesday. "The address numbers shown on the map have not been finalized or implemented and are still subject to final approval by the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea City Council, the County of Monterey, and USPS Address Management System. None of the draft address number assignments should be used for providing your location officially or unofficially."

Based on a system developed principally by resident Kevin Ruess — a member of the city's committee on street addresses alongside councilman Bob Delves, administrative analyst Emily Garay and residents Nancy Twomey and Paula Hazdovac — the proposed address numbers run from north to south and from west to east, increasing by

Map shows what everybody's address will be

By MARY SCHLEY

increments of 100 on the longer north-south blocks and by 50 on the shorter west-east blocks, more or less. The U.S. Postal Service, which oversees the address management system that validates physical addresses, gave a cursory nod to the plan before it was rolled out in draft form.

The interactive map shows numbered addresses based on assessor's parcel numbers, but also identifies a few areas where the system has been unable to assign addresses, including some multifamily residences and other random parcels, which are indicated in brown. Annexed areas of

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MAP/CITY OF CARMEL

The online map links APNs — indicated by the six-digit number on each parcel — to potential street addresses.

Capitol Access

By CAITLIN CONRAD

Stephenshaw, to do the job, and the draft \$349 billion budget he outlined shows the state receiving an additional \$42.3 billion in tax revenue over the next three years, thanks to the economy doing better than expected.

Erasing the deficit

The projected increase in revenue would almost erase the state's deficit, covering all but \$2.9 billion of the administration's new spending plan while shoring up the state's reserves with \$23 billion in the bank. Quite the turnaround from legislative analyst Gabe Petek's

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