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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City of Rancho Palos Verdes Declares Local Emergency Due to Increased Land Movement

Oct. 4, 2023 (Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif.) — The City of Rancho Palos Verdes has declared a state of local emergency due to accelerating land movement in the Portuguese Bend, Abalone Cove, and Klondike Canyon landslides.

The City Council voted Oct. 3 to take the proactive step of declaring a local emergency to bolster the City's ongoing response and allow staff to request state and federal assistance to address the landslide activity, which has damaged infrastructure and homes.

The Council also adopted an urgency ordinance putting a moratorium on new construction that may contribute to movement within the City's larger complex of landslides on the south side of Rancho Palos Verdes. The moratorium must be approved by the California Department of Housing and Community Development before it can be enforced.

As a result of the local emergency declaration, this morning, the City activated its Emergency Operations Center at a Level 3, the lowest level of activation, so City staff is mobilized to respond and is in continuous contact with government agencies. While the City continues to closely monitor the conditions and conduct inspections requested by property owners, no evacuations of homes in the area are needed at this time.

The local emergency declaration gives the City tools to respond to the emergency more efficiently, including the authority to expedite contracts for repair work and issue orders to help minimize additional land movement, such as prohibiting outdoor irrigation or requiring leaking swimming pools to be safely drained. No such orders have been issued and the City has only recommended homeowners in the landslide complex consider voluntarily taking these steps.

Rancho Palos Verdes City Manager Ara Mhrianian said the steps taken by the Council will greatly assist the City's ongoing efforts to protect the health and safety of the public.

"This action strengthens the City's access to resources to manage the land movement, especially in light of the El Niño weather pattern forecasted for this winter, and our ability to obtain possible mutual aid from county, state and federal partners," he said.

Although neighborhoods in the landslide complex have historically experienced movement, a significant increase has been observed since early summer, leading to the red-tagging of two

homes that became too dangerous to inhabit. The movement extends to the City's nature preserve, including the Portuguese Bend Reserve, resulting in trail closures. All the recent movement is believed to be primarily the result of heavy winter rainfall resulting in surface water percolating into the ground and lubricating the bentonite soil, since it can take anywhere from a few weeks to a few months after the rainfall for the land to move. Water pipe leaks, especially when undetected for an extended period, may be exacerbating the accelerated movement.

In addition to the local emergency declaration and building moratorium, the City Council directed City staff to present a short-term remediation action plan within 60 days. Staff will also provide support to two property owner-governed geological hazard abatement districts in the area that were created to mitigate land movement, the Abalone Cove Landslide Abatement District (ACLAD) and Klondike Canyon Landslide Abatement District (KCLAD).

The health and safety of the public and the protection of property, infrastructure, and the environment are the City's top priorities. The City is committed to keeping the community informed and has created a dedicated webpage at rpvca.gov/landmovement with resident resources and answers to frequently asked questions, including information on how to request a property inspection by the Building and Safety Division or report a water leak to Cal Water. Residents can send their questions to City staff by emailing landmovement@rpvca.gov and get email updates by subscribing to the Land Movement listserv at rpvca.gov/notify.

In addition to geological monitoring, the City conducts regular street-level visual checks in the Seaview, Portuguese Bend Community Association and Portuguese Bend Beach Club neighborhoods to monitor any new movement several days a week, as well as home inspections on request. While damage has been observed in homes near the red-tagged residences, no additional properties have been red-tagged.

Staff has created a working group comprised of stakeholder representatives, including ACLAD and KCLAD board members, homeowners associations and utility representatives to address issues related to the land movement and keep channels of communication open. The City was recently selected for \$23.3 million in grant funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for a proposed long-term remediation project to slow the Portuguese Bend Landslide.

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About the City of Rancho Palos Verdes

The City of Rancho Palos Verdes is located on a coastal peninsula overlooking the Pacific Ocean in the South Bay of Los Angeles County. Incorporated in 1973, the City is home to 42,000 residents, 7 1/2 miles of coastline, a 1,500-acre nature preserve and hundreds more acres of open space. Residents and visitors enjoy expansive ocean views and ample opportunities for recreation, including golfing, hiking, beach access and whale watching. Notable landmarks and points of interest include the Wayfarers Chapel designed by Lloyd Wright, the Point Vicente Lighthouse, the Point Vicente Interpretive Center, Terranea Resort, the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve and Trump National Golf Club.