

# Santa Cruz County Receives \$3.6M Grant to Protect Rio Del Mar from Flooding

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**OAKLAND, Calif.** – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has granted \$3.6 million to Santa Cruz County, CA for stormwater improvements to reduce chronic flooding in [Rio Del Mar](#), a low elevation residential and commercial neighborhood alongside Aptos Creek and the Pacific Ocean.

Urbanization, aging infrastructure, and sea level rise have contributed to the frequent flooding of 44 residential and commercial properties, even after moderate to severe rainstorms. Sometimes it is so severe that emergency access to the area is impossible due to complete road inundation along principal routes, preventing a safe evacuation for more than 400 homes along Beach Drive and the low-lying Rio Flats floodplain.

The new system will improve area flood protection five-fold by permitting the free flow of floodwater, eliminating backwater accumulation, and reducing the time contaminants remain in the sensitive habitat of Aptos Creek, where threatened and endangered fish species reside.

The \$4.8 million project includes a \$3.6 million grant from FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), with the remaining \$1.2 million from non-federal sources.

FEMA's HMGP helps states, territories, federally-recognized tribes, local communities, and certain private, non-profit organizations become more resilient to potential infrastructure damage and reduce future disaster costs. In the past 31 years, FEMA has invested nearly \$1.4 billion to reduce disaster risk in California.

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