

PESCADERO MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

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*An elected Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors representing Butano,
Loma Mar, Pescadero, San Gregorio, and the area extending to the Santa Cruz County line*

May 13, 2025

Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
1400 10th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Ensuring Equitable Access to Prop 4 Funds for Vulnerable Rural Communities

Dear Ms. Doddanari,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Vulnerable Communities Map being developed by the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation.

As the locally elected advisory body representing Pescadero, Loma Mar, and neighboring South Coast communities, we are committed to ensuring that the voices of our residents are accurately represented in state-level planning and resource allocation. We are concerned that the current draft map does not accurately reflect conditions on the ground. The map indicates low to medium social vulnerability in this area, despite the well-documented presence of farmworker and low-income communities who face disproportionate risks from climate-related impacts.

This is particularly significant because Proposition 4—the Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024—states that at least 40 percent of bond money must be used for activities that directly benefit communities that have lower incomes or are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. If vulnerable communities like ours are not accurately identified, they may be excluded from funding specifically intended to protect and support them.

We believe this disconnect may be due to several key issues:

- **Averaging effects mask disparity:** Based on the map's outcomes, it appears that local extremes in income may be averaged in a way that hides social vulnerability. In the community of Pescadero, for example, low-income farmworker families live in the same census tract as extremely wealthy Silicon Valley tech executives, many of whom have a second home in our region. This level of disparity can make it appear that the community is better resourced than it truly is for those most impacted by climate risk.
- **Census undercounts:** Farmworkers, lower-income residents, and Spanish-speaking immigrant community members—especially those living in employer or informal housing—are significantly underrepresented in data sources.
- **Access barriers:** It is well documented that this community lacks access to essential services—such as healthcare, transportation, food, and emergency response—which increases vulnerability to climate-related hazards. The closest health clinic to Pescadero, aside from a weekly pop-up clinic, is 18 miles away—and even farther (up to 20 miles) for those living near the

county line. There is no public transportation connecting Pescadero to any other community. More information can be found in the report, [San Mateo County's Forgotten South Coast Residents](#).

- Language and immigration-related risks: Many residents face challenges related to linguistic isolation or immigration status, which further increase social vulnerability and limit access to resources and aid.
- Rural infrastructure fragility: The region faces frequent communication outages, road closures due to flooding or landslides, and limited power backup systems that increase exposure and hinder emergency response. It also experiences water system challenges and lacks basic infrastructure for essential services, such as a laundromat and even access to clean water at the high school. Additional community challenges and solutions are detailed in the 2019 report, [Planning for Equity: Pescadero Town Planning Initiative](#).

We have not been able to access a detailed explanation of the map's methodology, but based on outcomes, we are concerned that these dynamics may not be adequately accounted for. In addition, much of the area affected by the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire—an event that burned over 86,000 acres and nearly 1,500 structures—appears as “no data” on the wildfire hazard map, even in projections for 2050. This absence stands out given the scale and recency of the fire, and the implications it may have for future risk assessment.

We were unaware of this process until recently—had we known earlier, we would have engaged sooner. To help improve the accuracy and equity of this important tool, we would welcome the opportunity to share locally informed data and perspectives. We respectfully recommend refining the methodology so that climate vulnerability designations—and the critical funding decisions tied to them—more accurately represent real-world conditions.

Thank you again for your leadership in developing tools to guide equitable climate investments, and for the opportunity to contribute to this process.

Sincerely,

Ryan Augustine, Chair

Cc: Senator Josh Becker

Assemblymember Marc Berman

San Mateo County Supervisor Ray Mueller