

Supervisors Abate 28 Homes In Devastated Love Creek Area

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An entire neighborhood of 28 homes in the Woodland Heights area, one mile north of Ben Lomond, was abated by county supervisors this morning.

The neighborhood lies adjacent to the massive slide that on Jan. 5 destroyed nine homes and killed 10 persons off Love Creek Road.

The 28 homes are located on mountainous land that has been identified as an active slide area.

The Jan. 5 slide came after historically high rainfalls saturated the Love Creek area mountain that rises above the small canyon neighborhood.

At this morning's meeting, supervisors heard mixed testimony from residents as some welcomed the abatement and others emotionally pleaded for their homes.

Abatement gives the home owner one year to 16 months to either move the house or tear it down.

It also opens the way for emergency Small Business Association loans; however, a number of homeowners said the SBA help is too little and they will still be faced with bankruptcy.

Homeowner Kate Klein told the board, "Everyone says this is being done for our own good, but I am facing nothing but

bankruptcy."

She said that the "bureaucratic hassles" over the past four months have her in a frame of mind "where I want to go home; I don't care if the mountain falls down on me."

Klein added, "We have done nothing wrong and we are being punished."

Others said they have put their full life into their homes and now they were left with nothing.

Yet others residents said they loved their homes, but since they have been declared unsafe, they could tolerate abatement so they could get on with their lives.

Homeowner Jerry DeLany said he doesn't oppose the abatement proceedings, but that the SBA loans that require abatement are not sufficient.

San Lorenzo Valley Supervisor Joe Cucchiara said the Army Corps of Engineers' report made it clear the area is too dangerous for habitation.

"The decision is a life or death decision and not a bureaucratic decision," Cucchiara said.

He added, "It is with an extremely heavy heart, but with a firm resolve and a clear conscience that I move for abatement."

His motion included direction that planning fees on rebuilding would be waived for the Woodland Heights people, and it passed unanimously.

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