

La Conchita slide prevention

John Hart, Ventura County Star, 8-10-10

Letter to the editor

Nearly 100 La Conchita residents attended a meeting Saturday in Carpinteria to hear the California Geological Survey's study results regarding the likelihood of the hillside above our homes sliding again. Homeowners want answers about what can be done to prevent another catastrophe such as occurred in the mudslides both in 1995 and 2005, the latter resulting in the deaths of 10 people. The CGS made it clear – the hill will slide again.

While the state, which funded the study at a cost of \$650,000, was well represented by experts on the matter, Assemblyman Pedro Nava of Ventura County was noticeably absent. Only one staff member from the county's emergency services department was present to take notes for the jurisdiction.

Where was Supervisor Steve Bennett or a representative from his office? Three viable solutions to the La Conchita mudslide problem were introduced in the study's conclusions and yet there was no one from the county to speak to the study's results or say what the next steps will be.

The findings show that the cost to the county to make a reasonable fix, by terracing and installing adequate drainage, equals or is possibly less than the cost of red-tagging three quarters of the village and evicting residents. At a price tag of \$50 million for the project, it seems the county would be wise to look for the resources to protect the Highway 101 widening that its Planning Commission just approved – not to mention to protect taxpaying residents and their homes – and fix this problem once and for all. This is a critical public works project that the county cannot afford to put on the shelf any longer.

Once again I ask, where was our County Supervisor?