

TRENDING: Santa Cruz rabbi brings purpose to incarcerated men through Choices for Life class



Derek Timm
(831) 239-9203
DRE 01386067

Aimee Thayer-Garcia
(831) 435-9146
DRE 01846533

Angel Garcia
(831) 295-1078
DRE 01880370



3554 Paul Sweet Rd, Santa Cruz

Once in a lifetime opportunity to become the next proprietor of 38 sprawling acres tucked away in its own hidden valley next to Chaminade Resort. It is so rare to find this level of seclusion and privacy while still being in town.

Offered for \$4,995,000



116 Aptos Village Way - Multiple Units

Accepting Reservations NOW! Contact Montalvo Homes and Estates to book your Property Tour and ask for details about an Exclusive Financing Product through the Builder's Preferred Lender.

2 bedroom models starting
at \$1,265,000
www.TheAptosVillage.com



Click Here

NEWS > ENVIRONMENT

Pescadero struggles with unclean water, rising rates

Many residents still rely on rain and creek water decades after instillation of clean water system



Farm worker Gabriel Echeverria, 79, of Pescadero, washes his hands with cloudy water after having dinner at Pescadero Community Church in Pescadero, Calif., on Thursday, June 12, 2025. Pescadero, a small agricultural community on the San Mateo County coast of less than 600 people, is facing a deepening water crisis. Residents are reeling from proposed water rate hikes from County Service Area 11. (Jose Carlos Fajardo/Bay Area News Group)



By **RYAN MACASERO** | rmacasero@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group and **LUIS MELECIO-ZAMBRANO**

UPDATED: June 29, 2025 at 11:12 AM PDT

FAST, EASY SETUP. ONE ALL-IN PLAN.

INTERNET + MOBILE

WiFi equipment + unlimited data included

1 Unlimited line included for one year

Learn more

xfinity

Xfinity Mobile reqs. Xfinity Int. Reduced speeds after 30 GB of usage/line. Data thresholds may vary.

NOW Internet

BEST OF



Listen to this article



When it rains in Pescadero, Irma Rodriguez gets to work — lining up containers on her patio to catch as much water as she can.

It may seem unusual in a town just 30 miles southwest of the wealth and power of Silicon Valley along the Peninsula's coast. But for Rodriguez, it's a matter of survival.

For the past 20 years, she has relied on water pumped from a nearby creek to bathe and wash dishes. But when it rains, the water turns dark and murky — “like chocolate,” she says — forcing her to depend on rainwater to brush her teeth or flush the toilet in the tiny rental that she shares with her daughter.

Her experience reflects a chronic crisis in Pescadero: a lack of access to clean water.

The small rural town has one public water system, and it serves less than half of the population. Now, San Mateo County is preparing to raise rates for that system — potentially tripling costs — deepening concerns among residents already struggling to get by and not addressing those who have no clean running water at all.

A stark economic divide runs through the county. In 2020, U.S. Census data showed the average income for residents countywide was \$132,000. In Pescadero, it was just \$42,000 — with many residents relying on Social Security, other government benefits, or working as farm laborers.

AD




For many of the town's roughly 600 residents — a figure locals say vastly undercounts those living in crowded farmworker housing — wages are even lower. Some townspeople told this news organization that many farmworkers in the area earn just \$20,000 to \$30,000 a year.

Of the seven public water systems within 2 miles of Pescadero assessed by the California State Water Resources Control Board in 2024, six were either failing or at risk of failing. Only one — County Service Area No. 11, or CSA-11 — was deemed to have “no risk.”

DAVID LYN #1 REAL ESTATE COMPANY
IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

A HIDDEN GEM IN THE RIGHT “SPACE” AT THE RIGHT TIME



552 BEAN CREEK RD #98, SCOTTS VALLEY
2 BEDS | 2 BATH | 1,587 SQ FT | \$930,000

[Click Here](#)



STARTING AT
\$30/mo
all-in

[Learn more](#)



Restrictions apply. Speeds up to 100 Mbps/20 Mbps. Actual speeds vary. Prices subj. to chg. A trademark of Ziff Davis, LLC. Reprinted with permission. © 2025 Ziff Davis, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

RECOMMENDED FOR YOU

- 1 **Photo | Santa Cruz Harbor Patrol keeps watchful eye on Monterey Bay**
- 2 **Here's what President Donald Trump's spending bill could mean for health care in Santa Cruz County**
- 3 **Editorial | RTC's latest win on funding for transportation projects**
- 4 **Pope prays for world to recognize urgency of climate crisis as he celebrates Mass' using new rite**
- 5 **Burning of fossil fuels caused 1,500 deaths in recent European heat wave, study estimates**
- 6 **Men under 40 are most at risk for testicular cancer. Few know it**
- 7 **Rubio says U.S. and Russia have exchanged new ideas for Ukraine peace talks**
- 8 **Soquel man killed in e-bike crash near Watsonville identified**
- 9 **Remains of man lost at sea in Monterey Bay in 1990s identified**
- 10 **Curtis Ramond Brown Obituary**

**FAST, EASY
SETUP.
ONE ALL-IN
PLAN.**

INTERNET + MOBILE

WiFi equipment
+ unlimited
data included

1 Unlimited
line included
for one year

The “no risk” rating doesn’t reflect how many people in the area actually get their water from creeks or private wells that may never be tested, leaving their water safety uncertain. In the two decades Rodriguez has lived in Pescadero, she said her water has never been tested.

Before CSA-11 was created, the town’s residents relied on domestic wells. But by the 1970s and 1980s, county officials found dangerously high levels of nitrates and naturally occurring salts in many wells. In response, CSA-11 was established in 1988 to fund and operate a public groundwater system.

Today, that system includes two wells, a 135,000-gallon storage tank and a distribution network. It serves about 90 residential and commercial connections — less than half of Pescadero’s estimated 205 households, according to Census data.

Rodriguez is among those whose dwelling is not connected to the system.

“We don’t have potable water. I’m worried because it isn’t water that’s 100% purified,” she said. “Pescadero is a historic town, and they want to keep it that way. They don’t want to add housing, they don’t want to add water, they don’t want to make any changes. But there are farmers here. There are farmworkers working in the fields. We’re already here.”

For residents like Rodriguez, getting clean water is a daily challenge. Some drive a half-hour round trip to Half Moon Bay — or even an hour to Santa Cruz — to buy bottled water in bulk. Others rely on neighbors or local churches willing to share water.

The shortage touches nearly every part of daily life. Sediment and inconsistency in her water rendered her washing machine unusable, Rodriguez says. Many farmworkers depend on mobile laundry services just to wash their clothes.

For those connected to CSA-11, a different concern is looming: steep rate hikes. The county had planned to raise water rates starting in July, but during an April 8 Board of Supervisors meeting, officials received 52 written protests. Although some were deemed technically deficient, the board ultimately decided to pause the increases — at least for now.

Rates were set to triple over the next five years. County officials say the increases are necessary to keep Pescadero’s water system running safely and sustainably. The revenue would help cover rising operating and maintenance costs, repay a loan brought on by a major 2011 water outage, and build a reserve for future emergencies.

Longtime resident and rancher Dante Silvestri said rate hikes would hurt low-income residents the most.

“It would hit us hard,” he said.

County Supervisor Ray Mueller, who represents the coastside, said the Department of Public Works will revisit the proposal and re-engage with residents.

“There’s no guarantee the next proposal will be lower,” Mueller said. “But they’re working to see if there’s anything that can make the increase more palatable. I still plan to go out and knock on doors, to meet with ratepayers and hold public hearings to explain why the rate increase — if there is one — is necessary.”

Another persistent challenge in Pescadero, the housing shortage, is deeply intertwined with water issues.

Despite wide stretches of farmland, development is constrained by the lack of water infrastructure, among other issues limiting new construction.

Rita Mancera, executive director of the nonprofit Puente, which works primarily with

[Learn more](#)


Xfinity Mobile reqs. Xfinity Int. Reduced speeds after 30 GB of usage/line. Data thresholds may vary.

immigrant farmworkers, said many residents are reluctant to report poor water quality for fear their homes will be declared uninhabitable, putting them at risk of eviction in an already tight housing market.

"I think we could still preserve this place and build affordable housing," Mancera said. "There's a lot of money around here. The people with resources, the community, the county — we need to work together to figure it out. How do we distribute that in an equitable way so people can actually live?"

"Honestly, we're not asking for much. Livable housing conditions. Water. I go home, turn on the faucet, and I don't have to think about anything. That's not the lifestyle of many people here."

Despite the hardships, Pescadero remains a postcard-perfect destination, known for its beaches, farmland and lighthouse. Tourists fill its quaint downtown on weekends. But for locals, the heart of town beats in quieter spaces: the post office, the community center, the fields.

And yet, frustration runs deep. Progress on water access has been slow. Many feel left behind — or forgotten altogether.

Pescadero Middle/High School has not had access to potable water for at least 27 years. A project to connect the campus to CSA-11 was approved earlier this month and is expected to be completed by 2027.

"When they have sports, they have to let the other teams know they don't have potable water so they can prepare," Mancera said. "What the students themselves are saying is that they feel embarrassed about the situation at the high school."

Mancera doesn't just want new connections or adjusted rates, but a long-term commitment to clean, accessible water.

"I think the county should work with the community and establish what is going to be the water plan for this community, not just now, but for the next 30 years," she said.

Michael Polacek, a resident who has studied the town's water issues extensively, said the solution may lie in applying state resources more effectively.

"So the magic wand would be: run this thing like a business, reach out to everybody that wants to connect to it, and let them connect under a program called SAFER," he said, referring to California's Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience program. "All humans have rights to safe water."

Originally Published: June 29, 2025 at 10:53 AM PDT



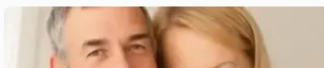
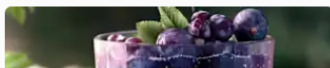
Around the Web

REVCONTENT



If You're Over 65, Try This Instead of Gutter Cleaning (It's Genius)

LeafFilter Partner





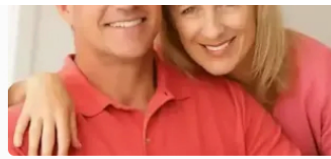
Who Charges The Most for Car Insurance in California

The Budget Calculator



Cardiologists: 1/2 Cup Before Bed Burns Belly Fat Like Crazy, Try This Recipe!

Health Headlines



Costco Shoppers Say This \$7 Generic Cialis Is Actually Worth It

FridayPlans



Important Update for Vehicles Driven Less Than 50 Miles a Day

The Budget Calculator



Taking US by Storm: The Whiskey Cup Every Man Wants

Ribili



Millions of Seniors Swear by These \$99 Hearing Aids

Oricle Hearing



Neuropathy is Not From Low Vitamin B (Meet The Real Enemy)

NeuropathyGuide



Neurologists: 1/2 Cup Each Morning Relieves Neuropathy Quickly! (Watch Now)

Health Headlines



Cool Down Any Space in Seconds With This Portable AC

Outfany



New Reading Glasses Are Helping Thousands of Elderly Americans Read Again

Yifare



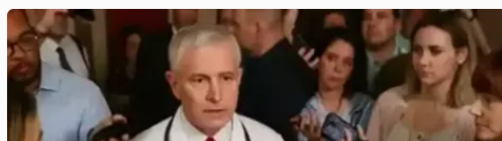
Seniors Born 1939-1969 Receive 11 Benefits This Month If They Ask

Super Saving Online



U.S. Cardiologist Warns Aging Seniors About Blueberries for Breakfast

GundryMD





The End Of Elon Musk Soon?

Brownstone Research



Why Did No One Tell Ozempic Users About This?

BeautyLoveLaugh



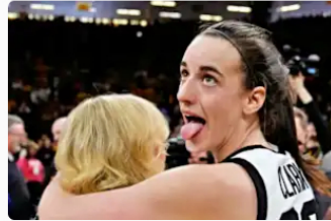
Limited Edition US Army 250th Anniversary Eagle Wreath! (Original)

Funfany



1 Easy Tip to Cut Your Electric Bill (Try Tonight)

NexoGadget



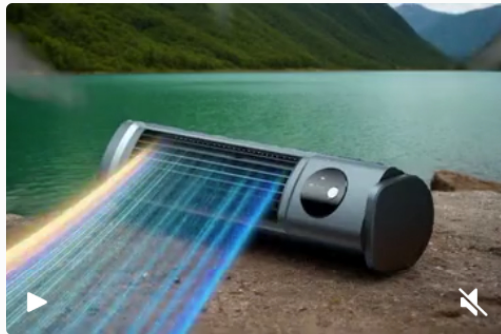
Caitlin Clark Steps Out With Her New Partner And Stuns Fans

Favour Life Style



Forget Furosemide, Use This Household Item To Help Drain Edema Fluid

WellnessGuide



This New Portable AC is Sweeping the USA

Outfany



Eat This Once (Daily) for Swollen Legs, Ankles and Feet

WellnessGaze Edema



Let This Soft Mineral Melt in Your Mouth to Rebuild Teeth and Gums

WellnessGaze Dental



Doctors Amazed: Simple Method for Vertigo & Dizziness

WellnessGaze Vertigo



Gynecologists Baffled: Simple Method Relieves Bladder Leakage (Watch)

WellnessGuide





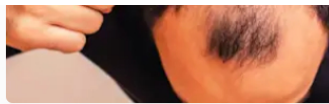
Uncover The Secret Behind These Beloved Glasses

Funfany



Eat 1 Teaspoon Every Night, See What Happens a Week Later

Health Wellness Journal



Hairloss After 40 Linked to 1 Common Thing (Stop Doing This)

WG Hair Restore



Taylor Swift's Mansion Shocks The Whole World, The Proof in Pics

healthtrition



Hair Should Grow Thick! No Matter How Severe The Baldness is

BioGrow



Optometrist-Approved Readers Selling out in The US

Ribili



MD: If You Have Dark Spots, Do This Immediately (It's Genius!)

WellnessGuide



These Glasses for Thousands of Elders Praise Are Sweeping

Ribili



If You See a Coin in Your Car Door Handle, Walk Away

housejogger



She is Married to The Most Handsome Man on Earth

App Cute



Doctors Stunned: the One-minute Morning Ritual That Erases Joint Pain!

Healthier Living Tips



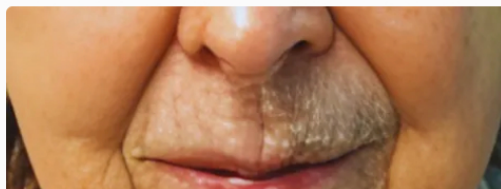
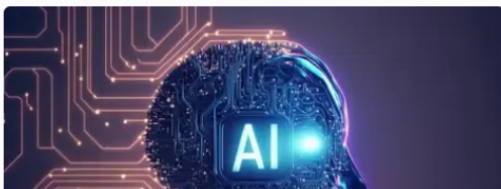
Tiny Device Reveals Why Japanese Rarely Need Assisted Living

CuraBall



Check Your Home's Value Instantly - Enter Your Postcode!

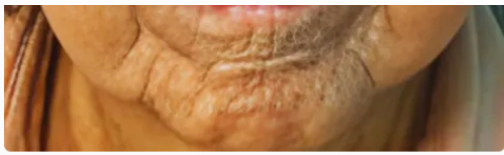
Home Value





AI Courses: Learn AI Lead The Future

Search Ads| AI Courses



Wrinkles? Forget Botox, Do This at Home

WellnessGaze Skin



Coast Guard Intercepts Strange Blue Boat. Then They Take a Look Inside

cleverst



If Your Dog Follows You Everywhere, Here's What It Means

articlestone



The Root Cause of Neuropathy & Nerve Pain (And How to Fix It Fast)

WellnessGaze Neuro



Credit Cards: Credit That Works for You

Search Ads| Credit Cards



Gold Investment: Timeless Value, Modern Returns

Search Ads| Gold Investment



Anyone With Diabetes Should Watch This (What They Don't Tell You)

WellnessGaze Diabetes



Don't Be Fooled, These Are the Most Dangerous Creatures on Earth

popcornnews.com



Puppy Won't Leave Railway, Police Turn Pale After Discovering What He Hides

beachraider



SPONSORED CONTENT

Costco Shoppers Say This \$7 Generic Cialis Is Actually Worth It

By FridayPlans

Save \$10 on your first package



3554 Paul Sweet Rd
Santa Cruz



116 Aptos Village Way
Multiple Units





Offered for
\$4,995,000



2 bedroom models
starting at \$1,265,000
www.TheAptosVillage.com

[Click Here](#)

MORE IN ENVIRONMENT



FACT FOCUS: Trump misrepresents facts about wind power during Cabinet meeting



City of Santa Cruz seeks input on Local Coastal Program changes



Burning of fossil fuels caused 1,500 deaths in recent European heat wave, study estimates



Pope prays for world to recognize urgency of climate crisis as he celebrates Mass' using new rite

<p>DAVID LYN REAL ESTATE DAVIDLYNG.COM 831.429.5700 CLICK HERE</p>	<p>A HIDDEN GEM IN THE RIGHT "SPACE" AT THE RIGHT TIME</p>	<p>552 BEAN CREEK ROAD #98, SCOTTS VALLEY 2 BEDROOMS 2 BATHROOMS 1,587 SQ FT \$930,000</p>	<p>OPEN HOUSE SAT 12:00-3:00 & SUN 12:00-3:30</p>	<p>505 CAYUGA STREET, APTOS 3 BEDROOMS 1.5 BATHROOMS 1,881 SQ FT \$2,099,000</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

2025 > June > 29

Santa Cruz Sentinel

SUBSCRIBE

e-Edition

[Sign Up For Newsletters](#)

CONTACT US

[Digital Access FAQ](#)

[Work With Us](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Accessibility](#)

[Sitemap](#)

ADVERTISE WITH US

MediaNews Group
Advertising

[Today's Ads](#)

CLASSIFIEDS

[Public Notices](#)

[Submit an Obituary](#)

[Local Guide](#)

[Jobs](#)

[Real Estate](#)

ONLINE CUSTOMER SERVICE

[Reprints](#)

[Get Sponsored Access](#)

[Sponsor A Group](#)

[SUBSCRIBE NOW](#)