

Ordinance Amendment Chapter 15A of the County Code Floodplain Management

Board of Supervisors Meeting
April 7, 2026



Agenda

- Background of County Code Chapter 15A
- Purpose of Amendment
- Amendment examples
- Recommended Actions



NFIP-CRS-Ordinance 15A

National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

- Administered by FEMA and makes federally-backed flood insurance available in communities that agree to adopt and enforce floodplain management ordinances
- County of Santa Barbara adopted the NFIP in 1979

Community Rating System (CRS)

- Voluntary incentive program that encourages floodplain management practices that exceed the minimum NFIP requirements
- Discounted Flood Insurance in the unincorporated County. (Current discount is 20%)
- County of Santa Barbara joined in 1990

SBCC Chapter 15A Floodplain Management

- Administered by development review staff
- Applies to structures in mapped special flood hazard areas
- Based on the NFIP and CRS program regulations, such as elevating the finished floor
- Last updated August 28, 2018

Currently, there are 962 Flood Insurance Policies in the Unincorporated County totaling ~ \$300 million worth of coverage

Purpose of the Amendment

- Improve clarity of the language.
- Remain in compliance with the State of California Department of Water Resources model floodplain ordinance and FEMA's NFIP and CRS requirements.
- Support safe development in Special Flood Hazard Areas.
- Supports the County of Santa Barbara's ability to apply Ordinance 15A to development within FEMA Preliminary Special Flood Hazard Areas.



Key Amendment Examples

Non-Conversion Agreement

Flood Vent Factor of Safety

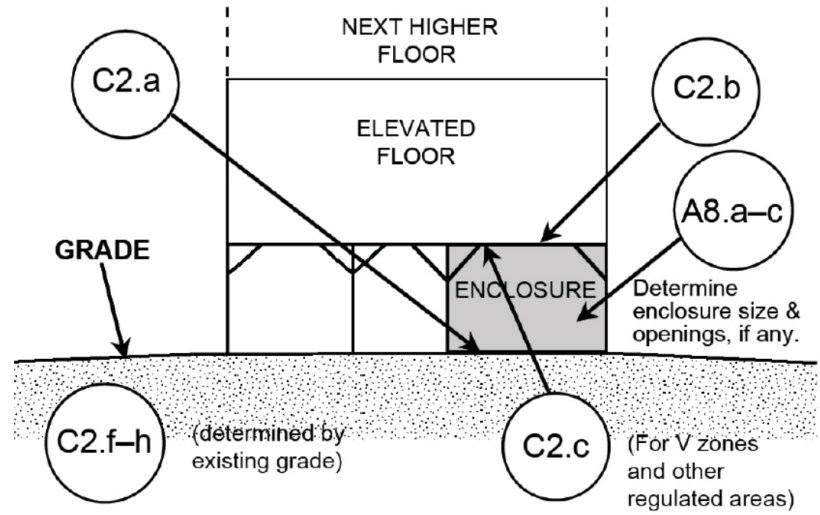
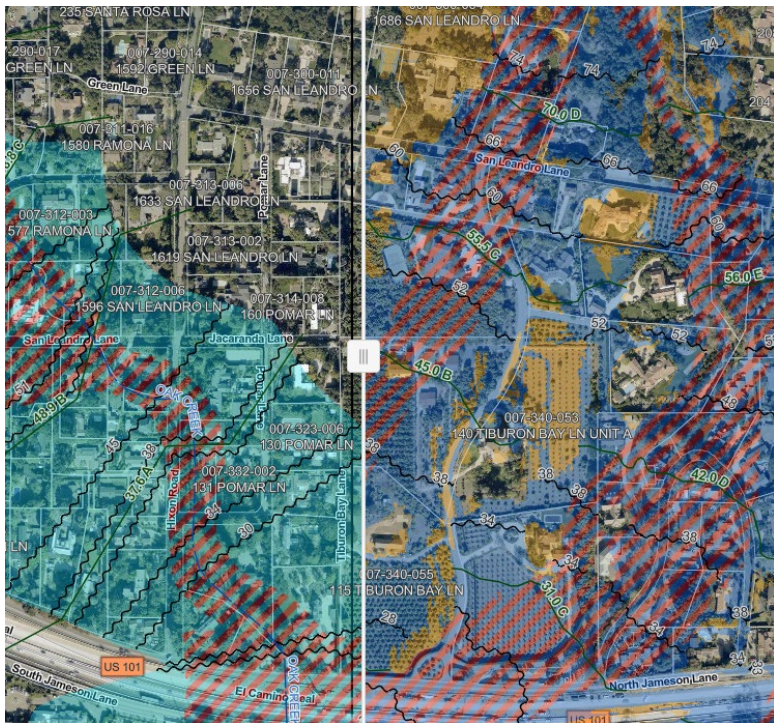


Figure 20: Typical air vents with insect screens blocked by flood debris

Key Amendment Examples

Ability to use
FEMA Issued
Preliminary
FIRM



CHAPTER 15A - FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT

Sec. 15A-1. - Statutory authorization.

The Legislature of the State of California has in Government Code sections 65302, 65560 and 65800 conferred upon local government units authority to adopt regulations designed to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of its citizenry.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Broadened and
Clarified Terms
i.e. “BFE+2ft”
where required

Recommended Actions

Your Board's actions should include the following:

- a) Consider the introduction (first reading) of “An Ordinance amending Chapter 15A, of the Santa Barbara County Code Relating to Floodplain Management”;
- b) Read the title of the Ordinance and waive further readings; and
- c) Continue the hearing to the Administrative Agenda of April 21, 2026

Thank you

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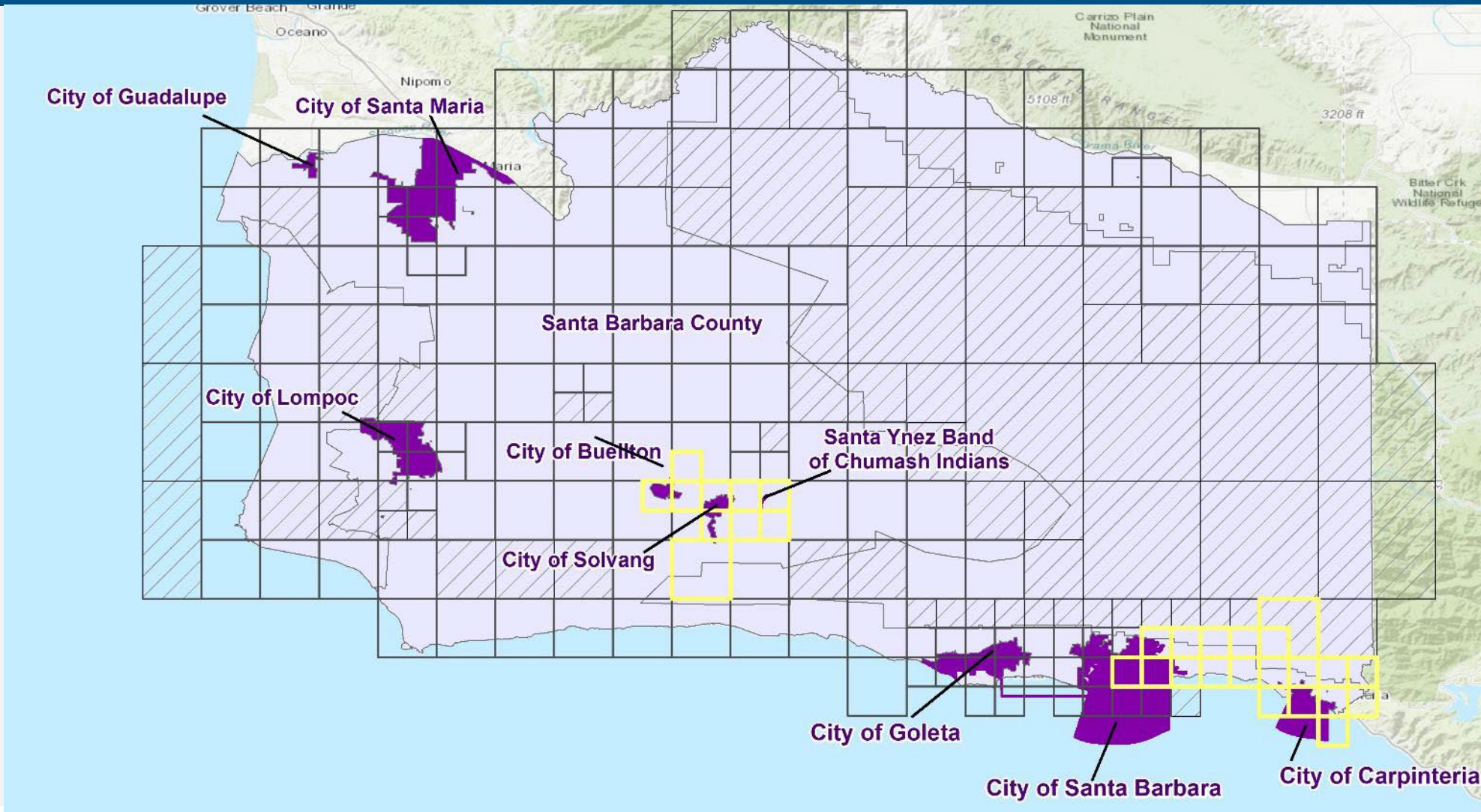


Supplemental Information

- These are not the standard conditions, but rather regulations related to FEMA-NFIP, and the CRS program that ensure safe development in the floodplain.
- The contract between FEMA and ISO to administer the CRS program is currently inactive, however, FEMA has informed communities that the CRS Program and discounted flood insurance will continue per a recent press release.

INSURANCE INFORMATION		
ITEM	NUMBER	AMOUNT
Policies in force	962	\$299,535,000
Claims paid since 1971	780	24,980,975
Repetitive loss	153	4,309,788
Residential Policies	912	
Policies in SFHA	956	
Policies pre-FIRM structures	584	175,075,000

What Areas Did FEMA Newly Study Flood Hazards?



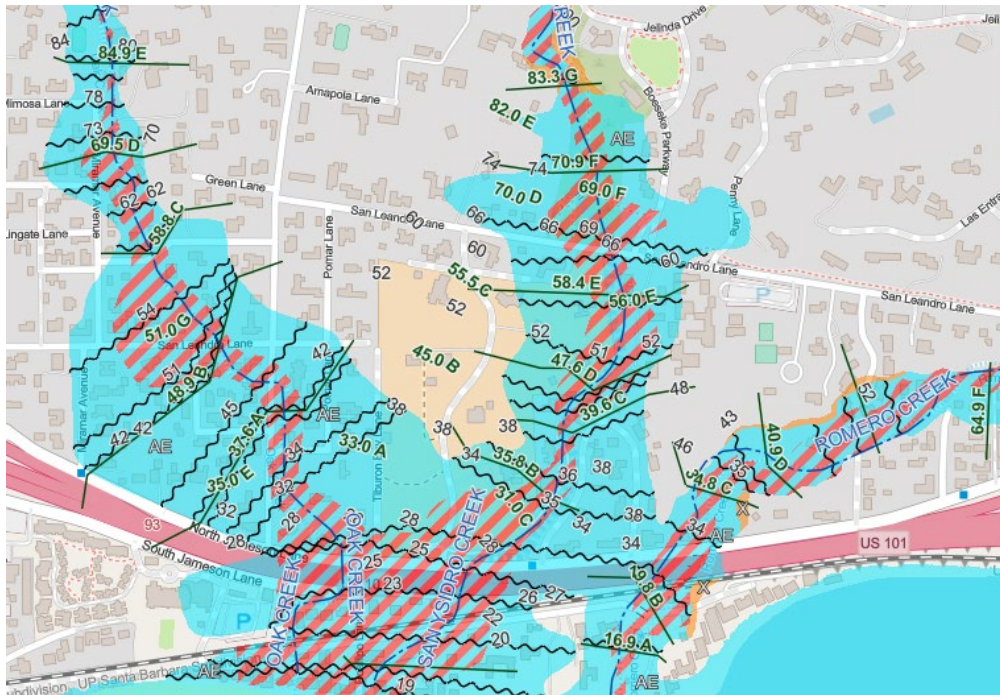
This map shows the locations of preliminary floodplain mapping (March 26, 2024) covering over 100 detailed study miles along multiple streams in Montecito, Cities of Buellton, Carpinteria, Santa Barbara and Solvang, Santa Ynez Tribe of Chumash Indian Native Lands, and the unincorporated areas of Santa Barbara County.



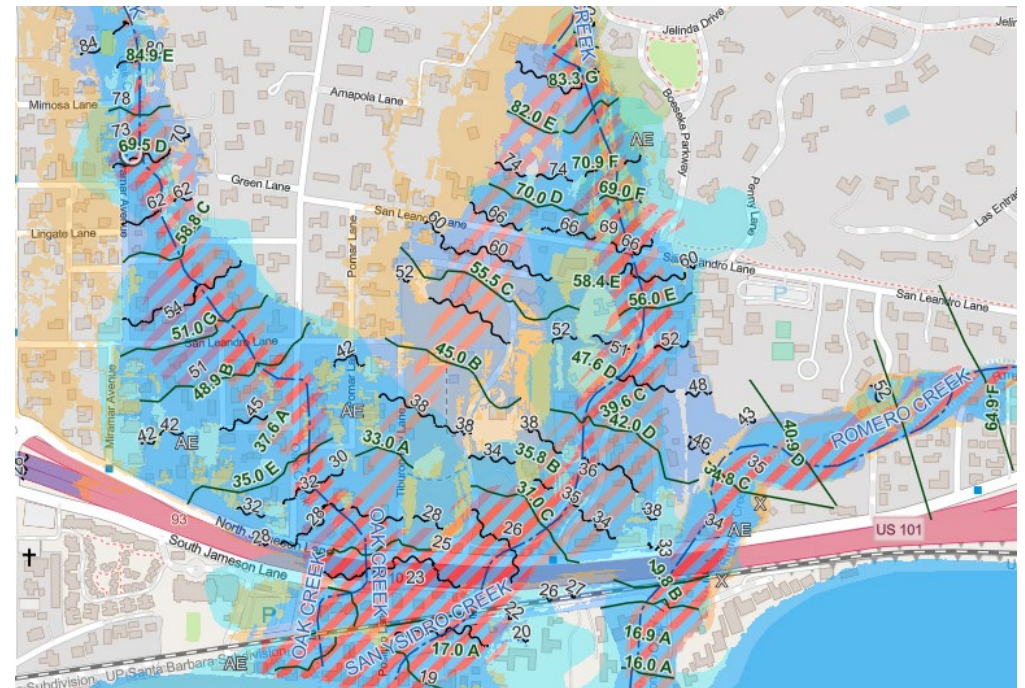
FEMA

Effective vs. Preliminary Special Flood Hazard Area

- Results were initially released to the public in March of 2024. A revision was released in May of 2025.
- Preliminary map was adopted by the County of Santa Barbara in July of 2025
- Preliminary map becomes effective June 2026



Effective SFHA
Oak and San Ysidro Creeks



Preliminary SFHA
Oak and San Ysidro Creeks