



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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COUNTY ACTS TO PROTECT DAVENPORT'S WATER

Taking extraordinary action to restore the town of Davenport's water supply, the Davenport County Sanitation District on Thursday announced emergency repairs to assure the continued health and safety of the community.

Historically, water infrastructure owner Cemex Corp. has maintained the water lines that supply the town of Davenport. However, the company declined to repair \$220,000 in storm damages to assure the continued delivery of water to hundreds of residents, forcing the Davenport County Sanitation District to take matters into its own hands. Since February, Davenport had been relying on a backup water supply that is expected to go dry within weeks.

"In order to address a significant health and safety concern for the people of Davenport, the County, at my urging, decided to repair Cemex' water lines," Supervisor Ryan Coonerty said. "We have tried to work with Cemex to get them to repair this critical water line, but while Cemex has been out trying to sell the water rights, they are neglecting to maintain the water infrastructure that serves this low-income community. If this situation is not resolved, the County may be forced to take legal action."

For more than a century, operators of the Davenport Cement Plant supplied and subsidized the town of Davenport with clean, reliable water from San Vicente Creek. When the plant closed in 2010, Davenport water bills increased substantially, placing a burden on town residents, many of whom are low-income. Shifting the cost of winter storm damage to Davenport residents will have further severe impacts.

"If our rates rise significantly, what do we say to the young families who recently purchased homes that they can barely afford in order to send their children to our quality local public school? How do we tell the numerous old-timers who are just barely making ends meet to pay their water & sewer rates, which have quadrupled in the last 20 years, that their bills may go up once again?" Davenport resident Noel Bock said.