

Experts: More deadly mudslides inevitable

By Jeremy P. Jacobs, E&E News

MONTECITO – Experts analyzing the catastrophic mudslide that claimed 20 lives here say there's no doubt it will happen again.

The big question: Will the state and local governments act to reduce the risks created by development in mudslide-prone areas?

“California tries to lead by policy, but unfortunately, we make advancements by crisis. That is our history,” said Susan Lien Longville, chairwoman of the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District. “Every time there is a major flood event, we have task forces and we do studies.”

Longville knows. She was part of a task force convened by the state Legislature following a 2003 mudslide that killed 16 people in San Bernardino. The task force drew up recommendations and a “model ordinance” that offered guidelines and requirements for development.

No county or city has adopted it.

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