



## Trump threatens Insurrection Act in MN

NEWS, 3A

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Regent's Slide landslide damage along Highway 1 near Big Sur. PROVIDED BY CALTRANS

## 2 members appointed to federal vaccine panel

### OB/GYNs critical of COVID-19 shots during pregnancy

**Fernando Cervantes Jr.**  
USA TODAY

More than six months after the controversial firings and hirings of a federal vaccine panel, Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr. expanded the panel to add two more members, one of whom has described themselves as an “anti-vaxxer.”

Kimberly Biss and Adam Urato, both OB/GYNs who have previously been outspoken critics of COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy, were appointed to the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, according to an HHS announcement on Jan. 13.

For more than 60 years, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has relied on this committee, which has historically been an independent expert panel, to establish vaccine recommendations. In June 2025, Kennedy fired all 17 sitting members of the committee and began appointing new members, which included some vaccine skeptics, only a few days later.

Both of the newest members have previously contradicted mainstream

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Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has appointed OB/GYNs Kimberly Biss and Adam Urato to the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. JONATHAN ERNST/REUTERS

# Coastal comeback

## Big Sur's iconic Highway 1 reopens after landslide damage closure

**Roseann Cattani**  
Salinas Californian  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Regent's Slide portion of Highway 1 in Big Sur will reopen on Wednesday, ending the longest sustained closure of the highway in the region's history after nearly three years of severe winter storms caused significant damage along Big Sur's coastline.

The Jan. 14 reopening follows faster-than-anticipated progress by Caltrans at Regent's Slide, where crews completed cleanup and stabilization despite challenging terrain and weather.

In the days leading up to reopening the roadway, Caltrans removed approximately 6,000 cubic yards of mud and debris (enough to fill 240 dump trucks) from the Regent's Slide repair site.

"I'm grateful to Caltrans crews for delivering Highway 1 ahead of schedule—deploying remotely controlled heavy equipment, stabilizing slopes with thousands of steel reinforcements drilled up to 60 feet deep, and using cut-

ting-edge monitoring systems to overcome extraordinary geological challenges while keeping workers safe," said Governor Gavin Newsom in a statement. "This vital corridor is the gateway to California's coast and the lifeblood of the Big Sur economy—and today it's restored."

Here's what to know about Big Sur along Highway 1.

### When did the Regent's Slide portion of Highway 1 close?

The closure began with Paul's Slide in January 2023, followed by Regent's Slide in February 2024, which was caused by a landslide that began 450 feet above the highway.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) identified 75 miles of the Big Sur coastline as one of the most active areas for landslides in the western United States, with over 1,500 mapped slides. The closure disrupted through-traffic, creating severe economic and logistical hardships for residents and businesses.

**"The reopening of  
Highway 1 has restored  
the singular lifeline for the  
residential and business  
community of Big Sur."**

**Kirk Gaffill**  
President of the Big Sur Chamber of Commerce

"This reopening will bring much-needed relief to small businesses and families in Big Sur and the surrounding communities who have shown remarkable resilience and strength," said Newsom.

The reopening comes months ahead of Caltrans' most recent estimate of March 2026 and as winter storms threaten to slow remaining work. While final stabilization and monitoring will continue, Highway 1 is once again open to through-traffic, restoring critical north-south access along the Central Coast and delivering long-awaited relief to tourism-dependent communities.

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