



County of Santa Cruz

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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PRESS RELEASE

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The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday took steps to confront the countywide problem of illegal dumping, setting the stage for a working group to consider code changes and outreach efforts to address a serious environmental problem that costs taxpayers hundreds of thousands annually.

Voting unanimously, the Board directed the county's Public Works Department to convene a group to consider measures to reduce illegal dumping, and also to initiate a pilot program which may include the use of camera monitors at illegal dumping hot spots. The Board also directed county staff to return in January with a more complete plan, including possible funding sources.

"In order to address this problem, there's not going to be one silver bullet. It's not going to just be the cameras, or public education, or enforcement. It's going to be all those pieces put together. If it were easy to figure out, we would have figured it out by now. But we need a coordinated plan and to move aggressively to address a problem that's affecting us all," Supervisor John Leopold said.

County staff identified several dumping hot spots such as Eureka Canyon Road, Bonny Doon Road, Buena Vista Road, Alba Road and more. In addition, several cherished county parks have also become targets for illegal dumping, including Anna Jean Cummings Park, Moran Lake Park, Greyhound Rock Beach and more.

Annually, the county budgets between \$150,000 and \$400,000 to clean up illegal dump sites, although the actual costs may be higher. Many of those items may be deposited free



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of charge at county landfills, including electronics, household hazardous waste such as used paint cans, small propane tanks and more. The county also recycles yard waste and some construction debris for reuse.

Santa Cruz County is a leader in environmental stewardship, having passed laws banning single-use carryout plastic bags, limiting the sale of polystyrene products, regulating the collection of electronic waste and licensing commercial waste haulers.

The county has also set a “zero waste” goal and operates two disposal sites: the Buena Vista Landfill in Watsonville and the Ben Lomond Transfer Station in Ben Lomond.

For more information, go to www.santacruzcountyrecycles.org. To report illegal dumping, call (831) 477-3907.

