



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### PROGRAMS PRESERVES VIABLE HOUSING, BUILDINGS

To help ease the housing crisis and protect viable housing stock and other structures in the unincorporated area, the County of Santa Cruz is pleased to announce the Safe Structures Program (SSP).

The purpose of the SSP, also known as the Limited Immunity Amnesty Program, is to promote the use of safe, healthy and habitable structures through special inspections and safety upgrades. Once certified as safe, owners will be offered relief from code enforcement so that the structures can continue providing needed housing and other resources to the community. Unpermitted remodel and addition projects as well as complete structures may qualify for certification.

To participate in SSP, owners would make any needed modifications and pay applicable fees. The construction would then be certified and available to continue meeting community needs. More information about the project is available online at the Santa Cruz County Planning Department, [www.sccoplanning.com](http://www.sccoplanning.com).

Eligible projects must have been completed prior to January 2014, and must be unable to be modified to meet current building and zoning codes, or be otherwise ineligible for a building permit. Active code compliance cases may be eligible. Under SSP, owners would receive:

- Limited Immunity. With certification, the County will respond to complaints about non-compliant conditions by indicating the property is safe, habitable and a low priority for code enforcement.
- Decreased Risk. Landlords who rent unsafe, hazardous or illegal dwellings can be required to pay for three months of tenant relocation assistance. With certification, this requirement would not apply.
- Decreased Cost. When building permits are obtained for modifications, certain impact fees are waived or reduced, and Code enforcement penalties are waived for the unpermitted construction covered by the certificate.

Innovation and increasing housing options are part of the Santa Cruz County Strategic Plan. To download the plan, go to [www.santacruzcounty.us/sp](http://www.santacruzcounty.us/sp).