



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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PRESS RELEASE

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BOARD TAKES LANDMARK STANCE AGAINST SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday voted unanimously to implement what is likely the first prohibition on single-use bottles of personal care products at visitor accommodations in the U.S.

Acting to protect the Monterey Bay and expand efforts to prevent plastic pollution, the Board voted to eliminate single-use plastic shampoo, conditioner and lotion bottles from local hotels, motels and vacation rentals. The ordinance would go into effect Dec. 31, 2020.

"Environmental protection is a core value of Santa Cruz County. Tourism is one of our leading industries, and many of our visitors come for Monterey Bay and our pristine beaches," said Board Chair Zach Friend, who brought the ordinance forward. "Single-use plastics have dire consequences for these ecosystems and threaten our local economy, and we must act locally to protect them."

Santa Cruz County is a pioneer in the environmental movement and has been at the forefront of reducing plastic pollution. It was among the first to ban single-use to go plastic bags, polystyrene products, plastic straws and other disposable plastics products, and has been recognized for its environmental leadership over the last several decades.

"This is a great step forward," said Barbara Meister, director of public affairs for Monterey Bay Aquarium. "It's encouraging to see Santa Cruz County working together with the hospitality community to address ocean plastic pollution. We applaud the county, and its hospitality industry, for their leadership."

The collapse of the global market for recycled plastics is increasing the volume of plastics going into landfills, where harmful chemicals can leach into soils and precious



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groundwater supplies. Under the ordinance, owner-occupied "hosted rentals" are exempt, and exceptions are available for those with disabilities or special needs.

"We have been using refillable soap and shampoo dispensers at our five hotels for nearly a decade as a means of reducing plastic waste," said Steve Allen of the Allen Property Group, which operates the Rio Sands Hotel and Capitola Venetian Hotel. "The Santa Cruz County hospitality industry benefits from our environment, which helps make our region a worldwide destination. Taking steps to protect Monterey Bay and our local ecosystems is not only environmentally responsible, it is good business."

Tourism draws more than 1 million to Santa Cruz County annually, contributing an estimated \$700 million to the local economy. Many come out of appreciation for Monterey Bay and the surrounding environment, making sustainable tourism vital to one of the region's key industries.

"Plastic, particularly single-use plastic, has an undeniably negative impact on the environment and we should do all we can to keep our ocean clean and reduce our carbon footprint. This ordinance is another step in the right direction. At Sand Rock Farm, we have switched to refillable amenities and eliminated plastic water bottles, and our customers appreciate efforts to reduce waste, particularly waste that can end up in Monterey Bay," said Jen Hagglof, proprietor of the Sand Rock Farm bed and breakfast in Aptos.

The ordinance will return to the Board for final approval on December 4.