



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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News Release

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S.H.I.E.L.D. SUBCOMMITTEE PROPOSES ORDINANCE PROHIBITING USE OF COUNTY PROPERTY BY FEDERAL IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS

On Tuesday, March 10, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors will consider initial recommendations from the Safeguarding Health, Inclusion, Essential Services, and Local Defense (S.H.I.E.L.D.) Ad Hoc Subcommittee. The subcommittee was established in January to evaluate how federal immigration enforcement actions and federal budget changes may affect access to services and community stability in Santa Cruz County.

The Board will review the subcommittee's first report and consider an ordinance that would prohibit the use of County-owned or County-controlled property as staging areas or operational bases for federal civil immigration enforcement activities.

"The County's ability to deliver health care, public benefits, and other essential services depends on trust between residents and public agencies," Board Chair Monica Martinez said. "Policies that reinforce clarity, consistency, and lawful boundaries ensure residents continue to access the services they need."

"Santa Cruz County has long affirmed that our community is stronger when residents can access services without fear," said Supervisor Felipe Hernandez. "These actions help reinforce the policies, protocols, and partnerships needed to keep our systems functioning and responsive to the needs of the community."

Composed of Martinez and Hernandez, the S.H.I.E.L.D. Subcommittee was tasked with reviewing County protocols, identifying operational gaps, and coordinating with community organizations and regional partners to assess potential impacts of federal immigration enforcement activity.

The report describes several areas of work that are already underway. These include strengthening County department protocols for interactions with immigration agents, establishing Countywide procedures for staff when approached by federal agents, monitoring trends in service use to identify potential disruptions in access to health care,

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social services, and public benefits, and collaborating with community organizations, legal service providers, and local partners not only to assess risks to the continuity of services, but also to work jointly on solutions that protect and support our most vulnerable communities.

The Board will meet in the basement community room, 701 Ocean St., beginning at 9 a.m. To view the Board item and proposed ordinance in English and Spanish, please visit www.santacruzcountyca.gov/Sanctuary or www.santacruzcountyca.gov/Santuاريو.