

## Press Release

DATE: May 31, 2023,

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### State and Local Officials Talk Trash

*Santa Cruz aims to be cleanest county in state*

Santa Cruz, CA - A coalition of interested citizens, state and local agencies, and elected leaders are launching a campaign to eliminate litter and illegal dumping throughout Santa Cruz County.

“We’re doing this to keep all of Santa Cruz County and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary free of trash and debris,” Santa Cruz County Supervisor Felipe Hernandez said. “Litter harms our environment, our health, and all sectors of our community, including businesses, agriculture, and schools. We need to be stewards of our natural environment.”

Known as “Trash Talkers,” the coalition is focused on engaging businesses and community members to sponsor and participate in cleanups of county watersheds, beaches, riparian, and transportation corridors, agricultural land, abandoned encampments and more.

“Trash Talkers’ mission is to make Santa Cruz the cleanest county in California,” Santa Cruz County Administrative Officer Carlos Palacios said. “We want to improve the health, well-being, economic value, and beauty of the county through education and engagement with the community, non-profits, schools, and local municipalities.”

Trash Talkers recently launched a website, [pitchinsantacruz.org](http://pitchinsantacruz.org), where residents, visitors, businesses, and schools can get involved, as well as learn more about recent Trash Talkers’ achievements. All members of the community are invited to visit the website, to host and participate in cleanups or just learn more about proper disposal of trash, recycling and where to take unwanted usable materials.

“People from all over the world visit Santa Cruz County, it’s important that we keep it litter free and beautiful, so they’ll want to visit and support our local businesses again,” Shaz Roth, chief executive officer of the Pajaro Valley Chamber of Commerce, said.

The Trash Talkers coalition includes offices of Congressman Jimmy Panetta, Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren, State Sen. John Laird, Speaker Designate Robert Rivas, Caltrans, California Highway Patrol, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office, County Office of Education, Pajaro Valley Unified School District, Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County, Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau, County of Santa Cruz, City of Watsonville, City of Scotts Valley, City of Santa Cruz, City of Capitola, local Chambers of Commerce and has been endorsed by the County Board of Supervisors.

“Litter affects our environment and our quality of life,” said Sally-Christine Rodgers, a local resident who coordinated the Trash Talkers initiative. “It is only through collaboration and sustained effort that we can achieve our shared goal of making Santa Cruz the cleanest county in the state. We welcome all community members and visitors to join this important effort.”

In addition, the County of Santa Cruz and local cities are rolling out an initiative to install the Trash Talkers’ Pitch In logo on trash receptacles, at trail heads, near parks, beaches and at other locations to help raise community awareness around this effort.

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