



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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MARTINEZ CHOSEN AS 2026 BOARD CHAIR

The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors has selected District 5 Supervisor Monica Martinez to serve as Chair of the Board of Supervisors for 2026. Martinez will be the first openly LGBTQ+ and Latina person to serve as Chair.

Martinez was chosen by her colleagues following a first year focused on protecting essential services, supporting vulnerable populations, strengthening wildfire preparedness, and deepening community engagement.

"Serving as Chair is an honor, and I'm grateful for the trust of my colleagues," Martinez said. "My focus will be on preparedness, equity, and making sure the County delivers real, measurable results for residents as we face growing budget pressures and climate impacts."

Since being sworn in January 2025, Martinez has helped lead several key countywide efforts. She worked to protect essential services like health care and food assistance by convening nonprofit and service-provider partners to address anticipated federal budget cuts. She also helped secure county funding to maintain access to food assistance and community-based services during funding disruptions related to the federal government shutdown.

Martinez brought forward a Board approved resolution to protect women and LGBTQ+ individuals in response to executive actions rolling back civil rights protections, and secured funding to support LGBTQ+ services, as well as legal aid for undocumented immigrants.

To strengthen wildfire preparedness and recovery efforts, Martinez hosted district town halls focused on evacuations and emergency communications, expanded fuel-reduction efforts with a yard waste removal program, and improved planning and permitting support for CZU Fire rebuilds. She also invested in parks and community spaces, and secured funding for improvements at Ben Lomond County Park and other District 5 projects.

As Chair, Martinez will preside over Board meetings, help set the Board's agenda, and represent Santa Cruz County in regional and state discussions, while continuing to serve residents of District 5. The Board also named Supervisor Manu Koenig as Vice Chair.

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