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COUNTY BOARD VOTES TO INCREASE ILLEGAL DUMPING FINES

Illegal dumping fines increase effective July 11

June 27, 2025 – Santa Cruz, CA – The County of Santa Cruz Department of Community Development & Infrastructure is announcing that increased penalties for illegal dumping violations in unincorporated Santa Cruz County go into effect Friday, July 11, following a vote by the Board of Supervisors to significantly raise fines to help protect the environment.

Fines will now start at \$2,500 for a first offense, \$5,000 for a second, and \$10,000 for a third. Previously, penalties were set at \$100, \$200, and \$500, which failed to deter illegal dumping by unpermitted haulers and residents.

Illegal dumping harms the environment and neighborhood quality of life. Increased fines are the latest measure the County has taken to make Santa Cruz County the cleanest in California. Other efforts include reducing single-use materials, offering free bulky-item pickup through the GreenWaste franchise agreement, improving reporting tools, and installing surveillance cameras in illegal dumping hotspots.

Cameras were purchased through funding from Pitch-In Santa Cruz, a program that supports community-based environmental initiatives. The cameras have already resulted in a misdemeanor referral for illegal dumping to the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office.

"This isn't just about handing out fines, it's about valuing our shared spaces, protecting the environment and standing up for the communities impacted by illegal dumping," said Carolyn Burke, assistant director of special services at the Community Development and Infrastructure Department. "By increasing penalties, we're sending a strong message that Santa Cruz County is serious about stopping this."

GreenWaste Recovery offers bulky item pickup services. GreenWaste customers in unincorporated Santa Cruz County are eligible for three bulky item pickups and four extra bin setouts per year at no additional cost, making it easier to properly dispose of large or excess waste.

County staff will continue to coordinate efforts with law enforcement and public works staff to track illegal dumping, increase reporting, and support clean-up efforts. Community members are encouraged to report illegal dumping incidents through bit.ly/stop-illegal-dumping-sc

ABOUT THE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

CDI serves all unincorporated areas in the county. The department's mission is to improve customer service, streamline projects, and to align public infrastructure and private development to further County goals in attainable housing, reliable transportation and sustainable environment. For more information, visit <https://cdi.santacruzcountyca.gov/> or follow the department on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Nextdoor](#).

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