



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

701 OCEAN STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

(831) 454-2000 WWW.SANTACRUZCOUNTY.US

CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

## PRESS RELEASE

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### COUNTY PROPOSES MOVING FORWARD ON CANNABIS LICENSES

To strengthen environmental protections and help facilitate the development of regulated Santa Cruz County cannabis cultivation and manufacturing industries, the County of Santa Cruz is inviting members of the public and interested parties to two meetings to hear an updated Cannabis Proposal allowing individual applications for commercial cannabis licenses to proceed under the County's development process.

Building on a draft Environmental Impact Report that includes more than 200 public comments, as well as the work of the Cannabis Cultivation Choices Committee and numerous hearings before the Board of Supervisors, the process would allow the establishment of a legalized cannabis industry while reducing impacts on the environment and neighborhoods through conformance with land use, environmental, building, pesticide and other regulations and best practices.

To present the updated Cannabis Proposal and answer questions, the County will hold two public meetings at the following times and locations:

- **Wednesday, Jan. 31, 5:30 p.m.**  
Governmental Building, 701 Ocean St., Santa Cruz, 5<sup>th</sup> Fl. Board Chambers
- **Thursday, Feb. 1, 5:30 p.m.**  
Felton Community Hall, 6191 Highway 9, Felton

The Board of Supervisors will give initial consideration to the proposal during a special public meeting on Monday, Feb. 5 at 9 a.m., with Planning Commission review and final adoption by the Board expected during February and March.



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Materials related to the proposal are available on the County's website, [www.santacruzcounty.us](http://www.santacruzcounty.us).

The proposal is based on options offered to counties through the Medicinal and Adult-Use Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act (MAUCRSA), which was signed into law by Gov. Jerry Brown in June and grants an exemption to the CEQA process for licensing programs, as long as local jurisdictions require discretionary review of individual applications, including relevant land use, licensing, building and environmental regulations (including CEQA).

While the draft EIR would not be certified under this proposal, each application would receive site-specific environmental review and be required to include any appropriate mitigation measures identified through the EIR process. The County believes this updated process provides the surest path to a regulated industry in the shortest possible time frame, while protecting neighborhoods and the environment.

As identified in the draft EIR, the establishment of a regulated industry has environmental benefits by bringing unregulated activity into compliance while generating revenues to increase enforcement of remaining unregulated activity. Staff believes utilizing the path set out in the MAUCRSA is the superior approach for the environment, neighbors and applicants.