

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Any person may address the Board during its Public Comment period. Speakers must not exceed two (2) minutes in length or the time limit established by the Chair, and individuals may speak only once during Public Comment. All Public Comments must be directed to an item listed on today's Consent Agenda, Closed Session Agenda, yet to be heard on Regular Agenda, or a topic not on the agenda that is within the jurisdiction of the Board. Board members will not take actions or respond immediately to any public communication presented regarding topics not on the Agenda but may choose to follow up later, either individually, or on a subsequent Board of Supervisor's Agenda. Public Comments will normally be received by the Board for a period not to exceed thirty (30) minutes. If, at the end of this period, additional persons wish to address the Board, the Public Comment period may be continued to the last item on the Agenda. Please note that the Board of Supervisors meetings are a limited public forum, and comments need to be addressed to an item on the agenda or something that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board. If comments do not fall into one of these categories, the Board will move on to the next speaker.

#5,3/11/25

STOP Lithium Battery
Energy Storage Installations

PLANNED** for Our Neighborhoods!
Near Homes, Schools, Churches, Businesses!
****Near Dominican Hospital, Aptos High School, & in
Watsonville!**

DANGERS Include:
Thermal Instability / Thermal Runaway
Explosions / Catastrophic Fires
(Like the Jan. 16, 2025 Moss Landing Disastrous Fire)
Fires Cannot be Extinguished Conventionally

Lithium Battery Fires Release **TOXIC Smoke, Ash,**
Dangerous Chemicals, including
Hydrogen Fluoride, Hydrogen Cyanide, Carbon Monoxide,
other Fluorinated Gases,
& **Toxic Heavy Metals** (cobalt, nickel, etc.)
that pose

SEVERE HEALTH RISKS, including:
Acute Coughing, Difficulty Breathing,
Irritation of Eyes & Skin
Long Term Lung Damage, Carcinogenic Effects

CONTAMINANTS Can **LINGER** in
the Environment,
Posing **Ongoing Health Risks!**

WHAT CAN YOU DO??

SIGN the [Change.org](https://change.org) petition:

Title = "Halt the Establishment of Battery Storage Facilities in Monterey & Santa Cruz County"

CONTACT Co. Supervisors / Santa Cruz 831-454-2200 / Monterey 831-755-5066

CA State Senator John Laird / Santa Cruz
831-425-0401 / Monterey 831-657-6315

CA State Assembly Members: District 28 / Pellerin
831-425-1503, District 29 / Rivas 831-759-8676, District 30 /
Addis 831-649-2832

CA Gov. Gavin Newsome 916-445-2841

CA Coastal Commission 415-904-5202

justin.cummings@santacruzcountyca.gov

INFORM your neighbors, friends, contacts

Websites:

Elkhorn Strong <https://elkhornstrong.com/>

Never Again Moss Landing

<https://www.neveragainmosslanding.org/>

Facebook Groups (go to facebook.com):

Moss Landing Battery Plant Environmental

Disaster Community Group

Moss Landing Power Plant / Vistra Fire

Symptoms

Santa Cruz County Organized to Protect Our
Community

#5, 3/11/2025

In order to make the changes needed to create the world we all are trying to envision . . . Be a True Activist, devoted to change by not Reacting. Instead . . . Be creative and come up with innovative solutions that transform the energy from limiting negative thoughts to a more expansive perspective that is inclusive of multiple trustworthy sources of information. This ongoing process will bring us closer to revealing the truth in such a way as will enable us to move on to a brighter, more powerful, and hopeful future.

J. Rosella

*You will never change things by fighting the existing reality.
To change something -- build a new model that makes the
existing model obsolete.*

Buckminster Fuller

#5, 3/11/2025



SANTA CRUZ
COUNTY OFFICE OF
EDUCATION
DR. FARIS SABBAH • SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Mr. Ed Acosta
Mr. Edward Estrada
Mr. Greg Larson
Ms. Sue Roth
Mr. Abel Sanchez
Mr. Bruce Van Allen
Ms. Rachel Williams

400 Encinal Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 • Tel (831) 466-5600 • Fax (831) 466-5607 • www.santacruzcoe.org

March 10, 2025

Board of Supervisors
Santa Cruz County
701 Ocean St #500A
Santa Cruz, CA, 95060

Dear Santa Cruz County Supervisors,

As Superintendents of Santa Cruz County's TK-12 school community, we write to express concern regarding the proposal to permit on-site cannabis consumption lounges in Santa Cruz County. Our primary responsibility is to ensure safe, healthy, and supportive environments for youth, and the introduction of cannabis lounges poses substantial risks to achieving this goal.

As detailed in a report to your Board by the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency, research, and local survey data demonstrate two core realities surrounding cannabis usage and the health of our youth:

- 1) Cannabis usage among teens is linked to the development of serious mental health disorders, including psychosis and schizophrenia. More generally, it has been shown to impair neural connectivity in the brain and is associated with poorer performance in schools as well as higher dropout rates.
- 2) Exposure to cannabis products, businesses, and advertising contributes to higher rates of usage and normalization of usage among youth. These findings are supported by troubling local data: from 2017 to 2023, the percentage of students perceiving cannabis as harmful dropped by approximately 26%, according to the California Healthy Kids Survey. Latine youth are disproportionately impacted by these effects.

In addition, consumption lounges raise serious concerns about increased incidents of impaired driving—concerns that underscore the risk of operating these lounges near schools as well as routes to and from school during commute times.

Notably, the overall rate of self-reported cannabis use among teens has generally decreased over the past decade, including here in Santa Cruz County. While this trend is encouraging, it obscures the reality that teens who are using cannabis are encountering higher potency products, resulting in higher rates of negative outcomes such as ER visits and the onset of Cannabis Use Disorder. Amid this reality—and the growing body

of evidence of the harmful impacts of cannabis usage for teens—it would be deeply regrettable for any action taken by this Board to inadvertently contribute to reversing a promising trend and increasing normalization of cannabis use by teens.

For these reasons, We must firmly oppose the establishment of cannabis lounges in Santa Cruz County. However, if the Board chooses to move forward despite these significant concerns, we urge rigorous adherence to the following measures as a minimal safety standard to reduce harm to our community and youth:

- **Location and Hour Restrictions:** Cannabis lounges should be located far from schools, childcare facilities, parks, and residential neighborhoods, creating maximum distance from places youth frequent. Likewise, these establishments should not be permitted to operate during school hours as well as peak commute times to and from school in order to reduce the risk of exposure and impaired driving incidents.
- **Advertising Controls:** Ban or severely restrict any signage or advertising relating to cannabis lounges to prevent furthering normalization of cannabis use among youth, at minimum aligning regulations with existing tobacco advertising restrictions.
- **Mitigation Strategies:** Require rigorous employee training to prevent youth access and manage responsible product usage. Establish clear consumption limits and robust oversight procedures to avoid overconsumption and related harms. Collaborate closely with public safety and transportation services to address increased risks associated with impaired driving and ensure safe transit options are available.

As your Board weighs this important decision, we urge you to carefully consider these impacts and prioritize the health, safety, and well-being of Santa Cruz County youth and their families. Thank you for your leadership and thoughtful consideration, and please do not hesitate to reach out directly should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Heather Contreras, Superintendent, Pajaro Valley Unified School District

Eric Gross, Superintendent, Pacific Elementary School District

Mike Heffner, Superintendent, Bonny Doon Union Elementary School District

Tanya Krause, Superintendent, Scotts Valley Unified School District

Kris Munro, Superintendent, Santa Cruz City Schools

Faris Sabbah, County Superintendent of Schools

Patrick Sanchez, Superintendent, Live Oak School District

Christopher Schiermeyer, Superintendent, San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District

Michelle Stewart, Superintendent, Happy Valley Elementary School District

Megan Tresham, Superintendent, Mountain Elementary School District

Scott Turnbull, Superintendent, Soquel Union Elementary School District