

General Program Statement

Formation / Purpose

Santa Cruz County Mosquito Abatement and Vector Control CSA 53 (“DISTRICT”) was established by Board resolution in 1993 through CA Government Code (25210) in response to many years of public demand for relief from pestiferous mosquitoes. The important underlying purpose of the program is the protection of public health from mosquito and vector-borne diseases. It was formed as a Division within the County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office. The Agricultural Commissioner serves as the Director of the program.

The program’s primary function is mosquito surveillance and control following Integrated Pest Management practices incorporating public education, biological control, source reduction and least toxic pesticides that have minimal impact on people, wildlife, and the environment. Surveillance includes sampling immature mosquitoes in water bodies and monitoring populations of adult mosquitoes using traps. Treatments are focused on the immature, aquatic stage of the mosquito because this approach is the most effective and environmentally sound.

In August 2005 property owners approved the North County Mosquito and Disease Control Assessment that expanded the program’s mosquito control operations from the original two “zones of benefit” (which lie within the Aptos and Pajaro Supervisorial Districts) to the entire County, following city-supported annexations of Capitola, Santa Cruz and Scotts Valley, increasing the area served from approximately 70 square miles to 445 square miles.

Abatement powers are authorized within County Code (Chapter 1.14) and the California Health and Safety Code (Division 3, Chapter 1, Section 2000 *et seq.*). The program puts response to resident requests before all other activities.

Funding

The DISTRICT first operated with revenues generated from a flat service charge on property tax bills. In 1996 the charge was converted into an assessment to meet Proposition 218 requirements. By 2003 this original assessment was inadequate to fund ongoing services and increased services necessary to respond to area growth and vector and disease challenges. In 2004 a ballot procedure was undertaken and South County property owners passed a Mosquito and Disease Control Benefit Assessment that in FY 2017-18 will add \$250,256 to the \$284,404 received from the original assessment, for South County revenues totaling \$534,660 not including interest.

The North County benefit assessment approved in 2005 will provide revenues of \$903,373 in FY 2017-18. While the original South County assessment cannot be

increased, for FY 2017-18 both the North and South benefit assessments can be increased by the Bay Area CPI for the annual change as of December, which is 3.0%. Total revenues for FY 2017-18 from the three assessments are requested at \$1,438,033, not including interest.

Fees are based on a calculation of the proportion of service benefit received by a parcel and are categorized according to land use codes established by the County Assessor's Office. The three assessments must be approved each year by the elected governing board, the County Board of Supervisors, after a public hearing. Resources are budgeted for the North and South benefit areas proportional to the revenues received, and salary and service expenditures are applied accordingly.

Revenue Index 130320 is used for revenues from the two levies for the South County: the original 101805 "Mosquito Abatement and Vector Control" assessment and supplemental 101807 "Mosquito and Disease Control Assessment". Revenue Index 130321 is used for revenues from 101808, the "North County Mosquito and Disease Control Assessment". Revenues are collected by Tax Rate Areas and the charges are administered by the County.

The Board in FY 2016-17 awarded Selden & Son in the amount of \$738,744 for facility renovations scheduled to begin spring of 2017 to include construction of a biosafety level 2 laboratory, and Vector Ecologist and technician room remodeling along with necessary upgrades to meet current building codes. The HVAC system, plumbing, fire protection, security system, ceilings, lighting, and flooring will be upgraded or replaced in the renovated areas.

Operations

The Assistant Vector Control Manager, a Vector Ecologist, a Senior Account Clerk and five Vector Control Specialists staff the DISTRICT year-round, with additional administrative support provided by the Agricultural Commissioner's Office. One Vector Control Specialist position was temporarily vacant for part of FY 2016-17. One seasonal Agricultural Biologist Aide was kept over the winter to assist with records, data and mapping improvements. The Assistant Vector Control Manager, Vector Ecologist and field staff are certified by the California Department of Health Services in mosquito and vector control and must complete 40 hours of continuing education every two years.

The DISTRICT is an active member of the Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California and participates regularly in meetings of mosquito and vector control regional associations. Staff attend training programs and incorporate the latest information on vector control and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) methods and materials to the DISTRICT's program.

A thorough environmental review with negative declaration was completed early in 2005, as part of the procedure for annexing additional areas of the county into the mosquito control program.

A community forum or open house will be held in 2017 to solicit input from the public to enhance DISTRICT responsiveness.

Staff routinely use backpack sprayers, an amphibious ATV, an airboat and other boats to perform a variety of treatment and control measures. The DISTRICT contracts with a helicopter service on an as-needed basis when applications of larvicides must be made over large aquatic areas. The most extensive mosquito source within the DISTRICT is the 600-acre Watsonville Slough complex. Aerial larvicide treatments are combined with ground based spraying of larvicides in response to requests for service from the public or when breeding exceeds pre-determined thresholds. In FY 2016-17 the DISTRICT renewed a five-year permit for applying vector control materials to aquatic sites from the State Water Board in compliance with Clean Water Act regulations.

Changing climate and proliferating breeding sites are challenging vector control programs nationwide in their efforts to protect humans, pets, and wildlife from emerging and re-emerging vector-borne diseases such as West Nile, Zika, dengue and chikungunya viruses. DISTRICT personnel conduct mosquito-borne virus surveillance by submitting chicken blood samples, dead wild birds and live mosquitoes collected in traps to State and UC virus laboratories. The DISTRICT cooperates closely with Federal, State and local health, regulatory and environmental agencies and the University of California, and has a cooperative agreement with the California Department of Public Health.

The Mosquito and Vector Control program also disseminates information on a wide range of vector-related topics, such as yellowjackets, flies, ticks, bed bugs, spiders, and rats, and provides mosquito-eating fish for yard sources when appropriate. A community education program is aimed at providing information to residents to enable mosquito and rodent control on their own property, and inform them of vector-transmitted diseases. DISTRICT staff assist State and university researchers in Lyme disease and Hantavirus surveillance and will also play a key role in responding to Africanized Honey Bees, if they were to arrive in the county.

For FY 2017-18 the DISTRICT will continue conducting mosquito surveillance for monitoring West Nile virus and encephalitis viruses and increase monitoring for imported Asian Tiger and Yellow Fever mosquitoes that have invaded other counties in California, increasing risks of infection from Zika, dengue and chikungunya viruses brought back by travelers. We have increased residential and neighborhood inspections for rodent infestations and provide property owners with advice to reduce and prevent rats and rodent damage. There will also be additional monitoring for other diseases transmitted by rodents and ticks, and stinging insect control in public areas.

Community health, comfort and prosperity are promoted by effective and continuous mosquito and vector control measures. The DISTRICT improves habitability, productivity, property values and outdoor enjoyment while protecting public health.