

NEWS RELEASE

Santa Cruz Mosquito & Vector Control District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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North County Funding Measure for Mosquito and Vector Control Services Overwhelmingly Approved by Property Owners

Santa Cruz, California – Following the announcement of a more than 70% support on mail-in ballots submitted by property owners, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors certified the results of the North County Mosquito and Disease Control Measure for Santa Cruz Mosquito and Vector Control (SCMVC) at a public hearing held today. The entire County will now be served by the SCMVC, a County Service Area administered by the Agricultural Commissioner.

This ballot measure allowed property owners in areas of the County not previously receiving mosquito control services to decide if they wanted to be assessed an annual fee by the SCMVC so that its public health services could be extended countywide to better control mosquitoes, to respond to diseases carried by mosquitoes, such as West Nile and encephalitis viruses, and to better protect public health by expanding disease surveillance and suppression services for other vectors such as rodents, yellowjackets, ticks and flies. The ballot measure covered properties in the cities of Capitola, Santa Cruz, and Scotts Valley, as well as Davenport, Soquel, Live Oak, Corralitos, the San Lorenzo Valley and other areas of unincorporated Santa Cruz County. (Southern Santa Cruz County including Watsonville, La Selva Beach, Freedom and part of Aptos have received these services since 1994.)

The proposed assessment of \$12.00 per single family home received an overall weighted support of over 70% of the ballots returned. A majority vote (over 50%) was required for successful passage. The official results are based on weighting the returned ballots by the proposed assessment amount. Assessment rates are derived from the use of the property and the amount of benefit from the services. Since this mailed ballot assessment measure was decided by all property owners, including business,

apartment and multi-property owners, each ballot was weighted relative to the amount of the proposed assessment. A property owner ballot with three residences, for example, was worth three times more than a ballot with one residence.

Upon announcement of the ballot tabulation results conducted by an independent tabulation firm, the Board of Supervisors approved the funding measure and passed a revised budget for the new revenues. This measure will generate approximately \$710,000 for the 2005-06 fiscal year. Last year South County property owners approved a similar mailed ballot measure to increase their assessments to pay for enhanced services. As South County rates are nominally higher, that area will receive proportionately higher staffing levels and control efforts.

SCMVC Manager, Paul Binding, said, "the ballot results affirm that the public recognizes the value of the public health and disease control services we provide. The funds from this measure will enable our agency to expand its service area to better protect the public from existing and new diseases that are transmitted by mosquitoes, insects and rodents, such as West Nile virus, Encephalitis, Malaria, Dog Heartworm and Lyme disease." With the North County funding, the SCMVC will implement a comprehensive disease surveillance and testing program, besides controlling mosquitoes.

For additional information about the SCMVC and its services, please contact Paul Binding at Santa Cruz Mosquito and Vector Control at (831) 454-2590.