



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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PRESS RELEASE

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COUNTY ADOPTS REMOTE WORK POLICY

The County of Santa Cruz is pleased to announce the formal continuation of remote work options for employees, adopting new policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and traffic congestion while offering staff additional quality of life benefits.

While preserving government services and public counter hours, the new policy is expected to result in half of county employees working from home two days per week. As Santa Cruz County's second-largest employer, the County is leading the way when it comes to designing a post-pandemic workforce that is mutually beneficial to employees and employers.

"The COVID-19 pandemic was challenging for everyone including County government, and we worked hard to maintain critical public services during this unprecedented era," County Administrative Officer Carlos Palacios said. "But we also learned to adapt, and we will apply those lessons in a way that provides tremendous benefits for both the environment and our employees."

The new policy is expected to save over 4.8 million vehicle miles, 212,910 commute hours and 366,600 car trips annually, or more than 1,400 fewer trips per weekday. County remote work reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 1,945 metric tons annually (equivalent to 219,000 gallons of gasoline), providing environmental benefits equal to the carbon sequestration of 2,400 acres of forests per year.

In employee surveys, 89.8 percent agreed or strongly agreed that remote work had no impact on productivity, and overwhelmingly agreed that communication between team members and supervisors was maintained during remote work. As more companies ask employees to return to the office, the remote work policy also give the county competitive hiring advantages and allows recruitment from a more diverse pool of candidates.

The remote work policy is one of numerous steps the County has taken in recent years to reduce its carbon footprint. Among them are the installation of solar arrays throughout County facilities and the recent purchase of the 500 Westridge Drive building in Watsonville, allowing the consolidation and expansion of services in South County and giving clients and staff the opportunity to reduce cross-county travel.