

COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

DATE: October 12, 2017

TO: Board of Supervisors, Santa Cruz County

FROM: John J. Presleigh, Director of Public Works

SUBJECT: Illegal Dumping Survey Results

In an effort to assess public knowledge of the illegal dumping problem and reporting procedures, Public Works conducted an on-line survey. The results of the survey will be used to inform the content of marketing campaign and show where education is lacking. Analysis of the survey results revealed the following:

- There were 118 total responses from persons in the Unincorporated County.
 - 75 people responded that they have seen somebody dumping in their neighborhood
 - 42 people responded that did not personally witness illegal dumping in progress.

- Out of a total of 100 responses to the question, 'what is the most common type of illegal dumping in your neighborhood?' The top four responses in order were:
 - Furniture
 - Cars
 - Household trash
 - Mattresses

- The perceived reasons of why the County has an illegal dumping problem can be broken down into six general categories:
 - 1) 27% said that they think that the cost/high fees to properly dispose of waste is the main reason
 - 2) 12% believe that the main issue stems from homelessness and/or addiction issues
 - 3) 8% believe that there is a lack of enforcement

- o 4) 6% believe that it is because we are a rural county with lots of hiding places
 - o 5) 5% perceive it to be due to a lack of awareness/education of the programs that we have in place
 - o 6) There seems to be a general consensus that people are lazy and the locations to legally dump are too remote.

- Of the 98 responses to the question, 'Who do you call to report illegal dumping?'
 - o 56% said that they call law enforcement
 - o 27.5% said they call the County
 - o 7% said that they don't know who to call
 - o 3% said that they use the County's Citizen Connect app.

- There were 57 respondents to the question of why people do not report illegal dumping. The answers were broken down as follows:
 - o 33.3% of the responses were not applicable
 - o 19.3% said that they didn't know who to call
 - o 14.04% had a perception that the County doesn't care or doesn't want to know
 - o 7% say that they don't feel safe reporting it
 - o 7% said that they don't report it because they don't have any evidence to convict somebody
 - o 5.26% say that other people usually take the items for themselves
 - o 3.51% say that they are too busy or in a hurry
 - o 3.51% say that they pick it up themselves
 - o 3.51% they don't report it anymore because when they have reported it in the past, nobody pursues the claim
 - o 1.75% don't report it because it is not an emergency
 - o 1.75% say that they don't report it because it is on private land

- In response to the question, 'What else do you think your local government should do regarding prevention, correction, and enforcement for illegal dumping?' we received the following data:
 - o 23.42% said that we should have higher penalties
 - o 11.71% said that we should install cameras

- o 9.01% believe that we can solve illegal dumping by addressing issues surrounding homelessness
- o 8.11% said that we should have free dump days
- o 4.5% said that we should have free bulky item pick-ups
- o 3.6% believe that we should have more police patrols in remote areas where illegal dumping tends to occur
- o 3.5% believe we need more 'no dumping' signage
- o 0.9% said that we should open on Sundays
- o 0.9% believe that we should have mandatory garbage collection service for every parcel in the County
- o The remaining 24.32% recommended things that we are already doing or were critical of government in general.