



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date:** April 2, 2019

**Contact:** Jason Hoppin, 831-454-3401

## **ONE-YEAR COUNTDOWN TO 2020 CENSUS BEGINS**

### **Accurate count means millions in local funding for housing, roads and more**

A broad coalition of Santa Cruz County elected officials, community leaders, local nonprofits and residents on Tuesday marked the beginning of the one-year countdown to the 2020 Census.

In an unprecedented display of unity, Board of Supervisors Chair Ryan Coonerty was joined by each of the four mayors in Santa Cruz County – Francisco Estrada of Watsonville, Martine Watkins of Santa Cruz, Jack Dilles of Scotts Valley and Jacques Bertrand of Capitola – at the Veterans Memorial Building in Santa Cruz to rally the community to stand up and be heard during the 2020 Census count.

"It is our Constitutional obligation to count every resident, regardless of age, income, gender, health condition, immigration status or any other factor," Board Chair Ryan Coonerty said.

"Millions of dollars in important community benefits are at stake, and this is the time for our community to stand up and be heard."

The County's annual budget includes more than \$138 million in federal funding. Those funds are used to provide community-based healthcare, food and financial assistance to low-income residents, housing, road funding and much more. The decennial Census helps determine not only the apportionment of federal representation, but the distribution of \$675 billion in federal funds nationwide.

However, California is at risk of an undercount due to traditionally hard-to-count communities, including foreign-born residents, renters, individuals living in homes without Internet access, homeless individuals and people living close to or below the poverty line, and young children. Each uncounted resident equates to the loss of \$2,000 in annual funding. Led by the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, the Santa Cruz County Complete Count Committee is focused on encouraging participation throughout the county. Under federal law, all information collected is strictly confidential.

"Many of the services our communities rely on depend on the Census count, so it is important for everyone in our community to stand up and be counted," said MariaElena De La Garza, Community Action Board executive director. "Remember: 'I Count, You Count, We Count!'"

For more, go to [www.santacruzcountys.us](http://www.santacruzcountys.us) or [www.facebook.com/SantaCruzCountyCounts](https://www.facebook.com/SantaCruzCountyCounts).