



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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PRESS RELEASE

COVID-19 TAX PENALTY WAIVER FORM AVAILABLE

To assist residents struggling with financial hardship during the novel coronavirus pandemic, Santa Cruz County is offering a special **COVID-19 Penalty Waiver Form** for late fees and interest due on property taxes. The form and instructions are located on the Treasurer-Tax Collector's website at: <http://www.co.santacruz.ca.us/Departments/TaxCollector.aspx>.

Tax due dates including the April 10, 2020 installment date are established under State law and cannot be changed by local governments, including local tax collectors or Boards of Supervisors. However, existing State law does allow for late fee and penalty waivers to be considered for "situations beyond the taxpayer's control."

There are no indications the State will change the due date for property taxes, which are used to fund essential government services including those being used to fight COVID-19.

The Santa Cruz County Treasurer-Tax Collector will also be requesting the Board of Supervisors to suspend the requirement that taxpayers pre-pay penalties and interest at the time of waiver application. Should the Board modify this process, taxpayers would only be required to pay the original property tax amount when submitting a COVID-19 waiver of penalties and interest form.

Property taxes help fund a variety of government services, with the County keeping just 13 cents of each property tax dollar it receives. The largest share of local property taxes dollars fund K-12 school districts that rely on property tax allocations for funding and for payment of bonds, while the rest is distributed to cities and other government entities.

To comply with social distancing guidelines, the Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector is encouraging online payments at <https://www.santacruzcounty.us/Departments/TaxCollector.aspx>, or by using the drop box system at the County Governmental Building, 701 Ocean St., Santa Cruz, 95060. Mailed payments must include a timely postmark of April 10, 2020.

The Treasurer-Tax Collector's office is closed to the public during the Shelter in Place order. We continue to have staff available to answer calls, emails and, if necessary, to receive cash payments by appointment only. For questions, please contact the Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office at 831-454-2510, ttc.webmail@santacruzcounty.us.