

Action Toolkit:

FLOCK License Plate Readers

"Get the Flock Out" Campaign, organized by local, concerned residents

UNINCORPORATED SANTA CRUZ COUNTY + SCOTTS VALLEY EDITION



Background: Flock automated license plate readers (ALPRs) are now installed in at least 5,000 communities across the United States, including the cities of Santa Cruz, Capitola, and Watsonville. The Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office maintains there are currently no ALPRs in the unincorporated parts of the County, but has published an ALPRs policy on their website that includes their usage. (Update: The Sheriff's office has said this was a mistake.) The City of Scotts Valley also currently does not have Flock ALPRs installed.

Police and sheriffs departments are already misusing the data collected, and highly questionable searches and data transfers have occurred in high numbers.

ICE and Homeland Security are accessing this data—indeed, the readers in the city of Santa Cruz were supposed to be obtained through a Department of Homeland Security grant, but that money came out of the general fund instead. Now, the SCPD is hoping to install 14 more ALPRs through grants. One woman was [tracked through the national Flock system by a Texas police department after having an abortion](#). Police departments and federal agencies [already share a casual culture of camaraderie and data sharing](#).

The cities of Santa Cruz, Capitola, and Watsonville are already using ALPRs and we must call upon their city councils to remove them. The County of Santa Cruz, which provides oversight to the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Department, as well as the City of Scotts Valley City Council which oversees the SVPD, should resolve to never implement ALPRs, and to do everything in their power to protect the right to privacy of their residents. The need to fight crime must be balanced with the constitutional rights of the people. We do not need to contribute to the mass surveillance infrastructure in this nation, especially under an authoritarian-leaning regime. See this [Moment of Truth Dispatch](#) article for more.

Actions you can take to remove ALPRs from your community:

- 1) **Sign on to our campaign!** Please email us at GTFOSCC@proton.me to add your name, title and/or organization as a supporter of this campaign (or if you have questions).
- 2) **Send a letter** to County Supervisors and/or to Scotts Valley City Council. Please copy/paste and add/edit/amend as you see fit [Supervisor and Scotts Valley City Council contact and meeting information is below].
 - ***Do you live in the City of Santa Cruz, Watsonville, or Capitola?***
[Click here.](#)

Dear Supervisor [Name]:

It has come to my attention that Flock cameras and automated license plate readers are present in our county, including the cities of Santa Cruz,

Captiola, and Watsonville, as well as *potentially* in the unincorporated areas of the county according to the Sheriffs [policy manual](#). Flock's database is being used by police nationally, [in cooperation with ICE and federal agents](#), to both conduct what now seem to be clearly unconstitutional immigration "enforcement" activities — and even [to track women who have had abortions](#). While the officer involved in this case — in Texas — claimed her family was concerned about the woman, the implications for women and others who seek reproductive and gender-specific health care are enormous and chilling.

It is my understanding that the data collected by these cameras is not just accessible by police departments nationwide (although, ostensibly, [not to law enforcement agencies outside of our state](#)), but also by the now heavily funded domestic force terrorizing our immigrant population across the country — in our state and in our county. We are quickly becoming a mass surveillance nation. Is this what we really want?

Please make an official resolution that our community will not install any type of ALPR tracking surveillance cameras, and if any have been installed within our jurisdiction, order them to be taken down.

Residents of this county on both the left and the right (indeed, across the country) already feel their data is unprotected and exposed to both the government at all levels and for private, even multi-national, companies across the globe. [Residents of Norfolk, Virginia are suing their city for ALPR installation](#), in alleged violation of the [4th Amendment](#) (unwarranted search). *Removing these cameras and resolving not to allow their violation of residents' privacy is one small but significant step we can take to push back on mass surveillance.*

Flock is a private company. We do not know what agreements they may have now or may make with the current administration, which is clearly openly hostile to our Democratic politicians and peaceful political activists and protesters across the State. In the past, we saw the for-profit [abuse of our entire state by the energy company Enron](#). Your job is to protect our population, our constitutional rights, our privacy, and our safety.

While [the Flock CEO claims that Flock is limiting cross-state-border access](#), only now that data breaches across state lines have been revealed by journalists, are we to trust that this private company will ensure the security of our personal data? Especially in response to possibly intense pressure from the federal government that is likely to come?

I hope that you would agree that giving the current anti-constitutional federal government access to more of our private data (travel data) beyond what it already has access to through irresponsible social media companies; breaches of applications like WhatsApp by foreign actors; DOGE; and new, authoritarian leaders of federal agencies, is dangerous.

I ask that you please look into these matters and verify for yourself how this data is being used and accessed, including areas that are opaque to us, and over which we have no oversight. Thank you in advance for your support.

Yours Truly,

Name (or Name of Group, if you are an organization)

Resources for Elected Officials and Others:

1. Flock camera [data mishandling](#) by police departments, California (state audit).
2. CalMatters: [California police are illegally sharing license plate data with ICE and Border Patrol](#). San Francisco Standard: [SF, Oakland cops illegally funneled license plate data to feds](#).
3. Number of Flock cameras in our county by city and how they have been used so far. There is a lot of missing information and no real safeguards in place as to how any other police departments may be using the data: [Santa Cruz, Capitola and Watsonville pledged not to cooperate with ICE. A controversial license plate reader may be undermining that promise](#).

4. City of Santa Cruz crime rates down, 2022-2023 without Flock cameras:
<https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/home/showpublisheddocument/99387/638488668541170000>
5. DeFlock (<https://deflock.me/>) provides a map listing reported locations of Flock cameras, including in Santa Cruz County.

What To Do:

Begin the conversation with your County Supervisor, and if a resident of an incorporated city, your City Council (remember, everyone in the county is now tracked, as well as all visitors, in Capitola, Santa Cruz and Watsonville, whenever we travel the county). Meet with your Supervisor/Council Member in person, if possible, with your concerns, and ask them to place a resolution to prohibit installation of any future ALPRs on their agendas. If they refuse, we will consider next steps.

Email and speak to the [County Board of Supervisors](#):

The email address for the County Board of Supervisors as whole is BoardOfSupervisors@santacruzcountyca.gov

PLEASE NOTE: Emails sent to this address will be **publicly published** in the Written Correspondence packet attached to the next Board meeting's agenda. ***If you would like to contact all 5 Supervisors but do not want your correspondence to become public as part of the published Written Correspondence packet***, you may [email each Supervisor individually](#). If you aren't sure which Supervisor represents you, [click here](#) for a map.

District 1	Manu Koenig	manu.koenig@santacruzcountyca.gov
District 2	Kimberly De Serpa	kimberly.deserpa@santacruzcountyca.gov
District 3	Justin Cummings	justin.cummings@santacruzcountyca.gov
District 4	Felipe Hernandez	felipe.hernandez@santacruzcountyca.gov
District 5	Monica Martinez	Fifth.District@santacruzcountyca.gov

Board of Supervisors [Meeting Calendar](#)

Next meeting:

Tuesday, August 19th, starting at 9am

Email and speak to the [Scotts Valley City Council](#):

The email address for the Scotts Valley City Council as whole is
citycouncil@scottsvalley.gov

[Council meeting calendar](#)

Next meeting: Wed, August 20th, at 6pm - City Council Chambers and on Zoom.

1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month at 6pm. Address: 1 Civic Center Drive.

Email and speak to the [Watsonville City Council](#):

The email address for the Watsonville City Council is
citycouncil@watsonville.gov

[Council meeting calendar](#)

Next meeting: **August 26** - City Council Chambers, 275 Main Street, Top Floor, Watsonville, CA 95076

Email and speak to the [Santa Cruz City Council](#):

Note: it is faster to send an email to each individual council member than to use the general email box.

Mayor Fred Keeley	fkeeley@santacruzca.gov
Renee Golder, District 6	rgolder@santacruzca.gov
Susie O'Hara, District 5	sohara@santacruzca.gov
Sonja Brunner, District 2	sbrunner@santacruzca.gov
Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson, District 3	skalantari-johnson@santacruzca.gov

Scott Newsom, District 4	snewsome@santacruzca.gov
Gabriela Trigueiro, District 1	gtrigueiro@santacruzca.gov

(Information continues below.)

[Council Meeting Calendar, 2025](#)

Next meeting: **Aug. 26** - 809 Center Street, Room 10, Santa Cruz, CA

Zoom option and Meeting Agendas [here](#).

If you would like to request extra time to speak on behalf of a group on a specific agenda item, requests must be sent to the Mayor and City Clerk by 5:00 p.m. on the Sunday before a Council meeting. Your request is not considered approved until you get a confirmation. Mayor Fred Keeley: fkeeley@cityofsantacruz.com and City Clerk Bonnie Bush: bbush@cityofsantacruz.com

Email and speak to the [Capitola City Council](#):

To email the Capitola City Council, use the address citycouncil@ci.capitola.ca.us. For public hearings, you can send comments to publiccomment@ci.capitola.ca.us, specifying the item in the Subject line.

Next meeting: **Aug. 28 at 6pm** - 420 Capitola Avenue, Capitola

Zoom option and Meeting Agendas [here](#) by meeting date.

[Capitola City Council meeting calendar](#)

Media Coverage of Flock Readers by Local/Regional PDs:

- Lookout Santa Cruz article: [Santa Cruz, Capitola and Watsonville pledged not to cooperate with ICE. A controversial license plate reader may be undermining that promise.](#)
- [SF & Oakland PDs are also sharing data with federal agencies, 100s of times,](#) and on at least one occasion by Oakland PD, with ICE specifically.

- [“Law enforcement agencies across Southern California violated state law more than 100 times last month by sharing information from automated license plate readers with federal agents.”](#) CalMatters, 6/12/25
- [“Bay Area cities are monitored by AI car-tracking cameras. A lawsuit says they’re unconstitutional.”](#) San Francisco Chronicle, 10/21/24
- [California cops are breaking surveillance laws. Who’s going to stop them?](#) The San Francisco Standard, 7/23/25

Media Coverage of *Legal Impacts* of Flock Cameras:

- Legal analysis of SB34:
https://calmatters.digitaldemocracy.org/bills/ca_201520160sb34
- CA State Auditor report analysis:
<https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2020/02/california-auditor-releases-damning-report-about-law-enforcements-use-automated>
- National coverage:
<https://www.404media.co/ice-taps-into-nationwide-ai-enabled-camera-network-data-shows/>
- Flock has supposedly disabled national look up for states whose laws prohibit it, but the feature was in place before reporters revealed that CA law and other states' laws were being violated. <https://archive.ph/0a7W6>

Government Links on Legal and Other Impacts of Flock Cameras:

- [Santa Cruz County Grand Jury Report on Surveillance](#) by Santa Cruz County (unincorporated) Grand Jury
- [Santa Cruz Sheriff’s Office Policy](#) lists ALPRs and **“Homeland security” is specifically mentioned within their data sharing policy** (p. 422): "The ALPR technology, also known as License Plate Recognition (LPR), allows for the automated detection of license plates. It is used by the Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office to convert data associated with vehicle license plates for official law enforcement purposes, including identifying stolen or wanted vehicles, stolen license plates and missing persons. It may also be used to gather information related to active warrants, **homeland security**, electronic surveillance, suspect interdiction and stolen property recovery." Access directly from the [Sheriffs homepage](#) by clicking "Transparency", then "Sheriff’s Office Policy" to bring up the policy manual.
- [Santa Cruz County sheriff-to-cut-ties-with-federal-grant-program](#) updated 8/2/25 by the Sentinel. “Notice of the grant program participation sparked a comprehensive departmental review to uncover **any additional points of**

collaboration with federal immigration enforcement, [Sheriff] Clark said, but **no other avenues were discovered.**” This is an ‘additional avenue’ whereby County ALPR data can be accessed by ICE to track migrants. Even if indirectly, ***such surveillance and data sharing must be prevented.***

- [California state law \(2015 SB 34\)](#) prohibits sharing Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR) data with federal agencies, by ***explicitly defining*** the term “**public agency**” in the civil code as **limited to local, county, and state law enforcement entities.**

Exact citation of the law:

Civil Code - DIVISION 3. OBLIGATIONS [1427 - 3273.69] (*Heading of Division 3 amended by Stats. 1988, Ch. 160, Sec. 14.*)

PART 4. OBLIGATIONS ARISING FROM PARTICULAR TRANSACTIONS [1738 - 3273.69] (*Part 4 enacted 1872.*)

TITLE 1.81.23. COLLECTION OF LICENSE PLATE INFORMATION [1798.90.5 - 1798.90.55] (*Title 1.81.23 added by Stats. 2015, Ch. 532, Sec. 3.*)

- [CA State Auditor report \(must-read\)](#) on 4 law enforcement agencies’ (LAPD, Fresno PD, Sacramento County Sheriff’s Office, and Marin County Sheriff’s Office) usage of ALPRs found LE Agencies routinely flout a state law requiring transparency and accountability designed to protect the public’s privacy and civil liberties.
 - This includes but is not limited to a failure to keep track of system searches and to publish their usage policies online.
 - Agencies storing ALPR data in cloud services do not have sufficient data security safeguards in their vendor contracts.
 - The auditor indicated that the problems are likely prevalent across what at the time was 230* California law enforcement agencies using ALPRs. (*Audit published in 2020; there are more now.)
 - “Surveys” tab shows Capitola was an earlier adopter than SC/Wats.
- 2023 CA Office of the Attorney General (OAG) [Bulletin to Law Enforcement Agencies \(LEAs\) on ALPRs](#). Among other reminders, “SB 34 does not permit California LEAs to share ALPR information with private entities or out-of-state or **federal agencies**, including out-of-state and federal law enforcement agencies.”
- 2025 CA Office of the Attorney General (OAG) [Bulletin to Law Enforcement Agencies \(LEAs\) on local and state law enforcement agencies' obligations under SB 54](#), which prohibits the use of state and local resources to assist with federal immigration enforcement, with very limited exceptions.

Other Groups Working on this Issue:

- DeFlock: <https://deflock.me> with a map/list of locations of Flock cameras, including in Santa Cruz County.
- ACLU NorCal, ACLU SoCal, ACLU San Diego & Imperial Counties, and EFF 1/31/24 [Letter to CA Attorney General](#)
 - **Letter has many links citing legal issues and cases**
- [Lawsuit in Virginia federal court](#) by local residents and public interest law firm [Institute for Justice](#).
- [Oakland Privacy](#) and [Secure Justice](#)
- Electronic Frontier Foundation (<https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2020/02/california-auditor-releases-damning-report-about-law-enforcements-use-automated>)

Pending Legislation to address gaps in existing law.

Note: the team working on this so far is mixed on whether new state legislation will be effective in stopping illegal sharing of Flock data. So far, legislation has not been effective. Nonetheless, any regulation is more welcome than none.

- **CA SB 274** (2025-2026):
https://calmatters.digitaldemocracy.org/bills/ca_202520260sb274
“State Senator Sabrina Cervantes, a Democrat from Riverside, introduced a [bill to regulate automated license plate readers](#) earlier this year, because “law enforcement agencies across our state are not following existing state law governing the use of automated license plate readers” and an audit by state employees in 2020 showed that.”
- **Assembly Bill 1337** ([sign-on letter of support](#)): updates the 1977 Information Practices Act (IPA), the seminal government privacy law that followed the addition of the right to privacy to the State Constitution in 1972. (Source: <https://oaklandprivacy.org/our-sponsored-bills-in-the-state-legislature/>)
 - Aligning the definition of personal information in the IPA with the more modern definition contained in the CA Privacy Rights Act. This would encompass data points like location data, online browsing records, IP addresses, citizenship status, and genetic information.
 - Expanding the definition of covered entities in the IPA to include local agencies, offices, departments and divisions.

- Preventing information collected from being used for unintended or secondary purposes without consent, closing the secondary purposes loophole to ensure that accidents don't put people into unnecessary danger.
 - Making the negligent and improper release of personal information that causes harm to a person potentially punishable as a misdemeanor
 - Requiring that IPA disclosure records be kept for three years and not be destroyed prior to that period
- **Senate Bill 361** (Becker). SB 361 adds additional disclosure items to the data broker database maintained at the California Privacy Protection Agency, which is developing a mass opt-out mechanism for all 500+ data brokers in the registry. (Source: <https://oaklandprivacy.org/our-sponsored-bills-in-the-state-legislature/>) The new disclosures include whether data brokers amass and sell information about:
 - Citizenship Status
 - Sexual Orientation
 - Gender Identity and Expression
 - Union Membership or Affiliation
 - Customer Log-in Credentials or Account Data

Santa Cruz County Crime Stats:

- Watsonville: [Annual Reports](#)
 - [Flock Transparency Site](#) - *recently added*
- City of Santa Cruz: [Crime Data](#)
 - [Flock Transparency site](#) - *recently added*
- Capitola: [Capitola Police Department Records Division](#)
 - [ALPR program info](#), and [Flock Transparency](#) site - *recently added*
- Scotts Valley [Crime Statistics](#)
 - [Surveillance Camera Registration | Scotts Valley, CA](#)
- County of Santa Cruz (Unincorporated): [Crime Statistics: Santa Cruz County Sheriff's](#)