



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Board of Supervisors - Fifth District

Subject: Display of Pride Flag and Lighting of County Governmental Center in Honor of Santa Cruz Pride and Pride Month

Meeting Date: April 8, 2025

Formal Title: Authorize the General Services Department to fly the Progressive Pride Flag outside the County Governmental Center and South County Government Center, and illuminate the exterior of 701 Ocean Street in rainbow lights, from May 27 through June 30, 2025, and take related actions

Recommended Actions

1. Authorize the General Services Department to fly the Progressive Pride Flag outside the County Governmental Center and the South County Government Center from May 27 through June 30, 2025, in honor of LGBTQ+ Pride Month and the 50th anniversary of Santa Cruz Pride; and
2. Illuminate the exterior of 701 Ocean Street in rainbow lights from May 27 through June 30, 2025; and
3. Provide ongoing authority to staff to fly the Progressive Pride Flag at both locations and illuminate 701 Ocean Street in rainbow lights for the month of June in successive years.

Executive Summary

LGBTQ+ Pride Month is celebrated throughout California and large parts of the United States in June. In previous years, the County has raised the Pride flag outside the County Government center in recognition and support of our LGBTQ+ community. This year marks the 50th anniversary of Santa Cruz Pride. By flying the Progressive Pride Flag outside the two main County government building sites and illuminating the exterior of 701 Ocean Street in rainbow colors, and repeating these actions in successive years throughout the month of June, the County will demonstrate its ongoing support for the LGBTQ+ community.

Discussion

LGBTQ+ Pride Month has been observed in communities across the United States since the years following the Stonewall Riots in New York City, which began in late June 1969 and catalyzed what became a decades-long social movement to establish and maintain equal rights for members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer+ communities. Santa Cruz County has been no different in its efforts to support LGBTQ+ residents and their allies, and this year will celebrate 50 years since the first Santa Cruz Pride events took place in June 1975 and were formally recognized by the Board of Supervisors that year as "Gay Pride Week."

The Pride Flag, or Rainbow Flag, is an important symbol of the LGBTQ+ movement, and over the years has been modified in recent years to be more visibly inclusive of transgender and intersex communities as well as communities of color, and to demonstrate the intersectionality of identities within the LGBTQ+ spectrum. This new

version of the Pride flag is known as the Progressive Pride Flag. The illumination of government buildings in rainbow colors, as has been done in San Francisco and other cities for many years, is a cost-effective, celebratory way of visibly showing the community's commitment to LGBTQ+ people.

Flying the Progressive Pride Flag and illuminating the exterior of the County Governmental Center will reflect our County's actions, both formal and informal, over the past several decades to recognize and address the needs of LGBTQ+ residents, including by supporting marriage equality, adopting non-discriminatory hiring practices, and providing progressive healthcare meant to address a host of sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions.

Most recently, on January 28, 2025, the Board reaffirmed its support for the LGBTQ+ community amid actions by the federal administration to dilute legal recognition and other protections for transgender and intersex people. Further, on February 25, the Board voted, as a demonstration of that support, to allocate \$100,000 toward the provision of community-based support and legal services for LGBTQ+ community members. In June 2023, the Board established a policy governing the use of official and commemorative flags on County property, which specifies that requests to fly a commemorative flag must come from a member of the Board or the County Executive Officer and be approved by a majority of the Board.

Therefore, Board approval is requested to fly the Progressive Pride Flag and illuminate the County Governmental Center in rainbow colors beginning on May 27, 2025, in recognition of the 50th anniversary events for Santa Cruz Pride, which will commence on that date and culminate in the downtown Santa Cruz Pride Parade on June 1. It is further requested to maintain the flag and building illumination throughout the remainder of June 2025 – and to authorize staff to perform such actions every June thereafter – in celebration of the nationwide recognition of Pride Month.

Financial Impact

The recommended actions do not have a financial impact.

Strategic Initiatives

Operational Plan - Comprehensive Health & Safety

Submitted By:

Monica Martinez, Fifth District Supervisor

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.