



January 18, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor Blakespear and City Council Members

Fr: Californians for Environmental Responsibility

Re: City Council Ordinance 2022-01 - OPPOSE

We are writing to you to express our opposition to agenda item 10C, the ordinance prohibiting the sale of lighter-than-air balloons. Californians for Environmental Responsibility is a broad coalition representing social justice organizations, small businesses, and minority chambers of commerce among others.

We can all agree that keeping our oceans and beaches clean is important. In environmentally sensitive areas like on beaches, we accept restrictions on smoking and glass bottles due to the harm they pose. **A similar restriction to balloons on beaches would be a welcome and sensible alternative to an outright ban.** In addition, we support programs that educate consumers on the importance of preventing balloon releases and raising awareness on the part we all play in protecting the environment.

Retailers recognize the importance of environmental issues and are launching recycling programs to ensure balloons are disposed of responsibly. Many retailers are including responsible balloon usage education at the point-of-sale through balloon care cards.

Sustainable environmental policy ought to be based on unbiased and transparent scientific studies while balancing the needs of broader community stakeholders including local businesses and residents.

The Ocean Conservancy is cited in the ordinance for listing “balloons as the second dangerous debris item” and “the most common form of floating garbage off American shorelines”, however these claims are unsubstantiated according to the Ocean Conservancy’s own reports. For instance in its 2021 International Coastal Cleanup Report, **balloons are not one of the top ten items found on California beaches.**

The ban will cause a significant economic impact to local retailers and small businesses in Encinitas and surrounding communities. You don’t have to look far to see who is threatened by this ordinance: florists, local retailers, balloon decorators and twisters, and event planners. In other words, our neighbors. These businesses, including minority-owned small businesses, are already struggling after the COVID-19 pandemic. Placing this ordinance on their business now will force many of them to close their doors.

We ask that the City of Encinitas City Council please work with businesses in the community to create solutions that protect our environment while not forcing businesses to close.

Sincerely,

Rachel Michelin
President
California Retailers Association

On behalf of:

Asian Industry B2B
Anagram International
Balloons and Party Events
Balloon Guru LLC
California African American Chamber of Commerce
California Hispanic Chambers of Commerce
California Retailers Association
Consumer Choice Center
Family Business Association of California
GlassHouse Balloon Co., Inc.
LA Balloons
National Action Network, LAX
National Federation of Independent Business
National Tax Limitation Committee
Party City
United Latinos Vote