



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: June 10, 2014

AGENDA OF: June 24, 2014
DEPARTMENT: City Manager
SUBJECT: Independence Day 2014 - Safety Enhancement Zone Designation (CM)

RECOMMENDATION: Resolution designating the area within the City of Santa Cruz geographic boundaries to the Pacific Ocean a temporary safety enhancement zone for Independence Day 2014 in effect from 12:01 a.m. on July 4, 2014 to 11:59 p.m. on July 6, 2014, increasing fines and penalties for certain municipal code violations in the safety enhancement zone during the effective time of the safety enhancement zone.

BACKGROUND: The City Council adopted the Safety Enhancement Zone ordinance in July, 2006 to help protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents of, and visitors to, the City of Santa Cruz and authorizes the City Council to designate temporary safety enhancement zones and enhance the penalties for the violation of certain Municipal Code Chapters. The City Council has designated a safety enhancement zone for Halloween, New Year's Eve and Independence Day within certain geographic locations over the past seven years, which has proven effective in deterring illegal and unsafe activities.

Traditionally, City Council has designated the beach areas a safety enhancement zone during the Fourth of July weekend, given the significant influx of residents and visitors to the beach, and propensity for individuals to violate public drinking, fireworks usage and other Municipal Code sections. This effort has had some success in reducing illegal activity in the Beach areas, particularly use of illegal fireworks. However, the City has witnessed an alarming proliferation of illegal fireworks in the City on and around the Fourth of July Holiday. Illegal fireworks are deployed in City parks, streets, and residential lawns in high volumes and in such a widespread manner that the combined public safety and security personnel of the City cannot prevent these acts from occurring. Moreover, our fire suppression resources are stretched thin due to tremendous visitor crowds that weekend which limits the ability to respond as quickly to calls for service. In 2013, the City received 130 calls for service citywide related to fireworks on Independence Day 2013. It is expected that number will increase in 2014 given that the Fourth of July falls on a Friday. Moreover, given the Friday holiday, the City expects the Independence Day celebrations—and demands on City resources and impacts on the community—to be sustained through the weekend.

The City has declared a Stage 3 water shortage emergency in response to the statewide drought. This declaration mandated residential water rationing and outdoor water restrictions, which has resulted in drier landscaping in parks and residences citywide and increased available fire fuel and fire risk in the entirety of City limits. The dry conditions and increased use of illegal fireworks presents a significant fire risk to the entire community over the upcoming Fourth of July Holiday weekend.

DISCUSSION: Staff recommends City Council approval of the recommendation to designate the entire City of Santa Cruz, and extending from its boundaries to the Pacific Ocean, as a safety enhancement zone during the 2014 Fourth of July Holiday weekend, to be in effect from 12:01 a.m. on Friday July 4, 2014 to 11:59 p.m. on Sunday July 6, 2014.

The City anticipates large crowds for the Holiday and given the success of past safety enhancement zones, expects that the same success could be obtained in terms of deterring illegal activity, particularly use of illegal fireworks, thereby rendering the City safer from losses, damages and injury from fire.

FISCAL IMPACT: Approval of this recommendation has no fiscal impact on the General Fund.

Submitted by:	Approved by:
Scott Collins	Martin Bernal
Assistant to the City Manager	City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution
Santa Cruz Fire Department Chief Letter of Support