

From: [Mitch B](#)
To: [CITYCOUNCIL-List](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Written comment for item 7D of 12/2/25 City Council Meeting
Date: Tuesday, December 2, 2025 10:16:06 AM

Hello,

I will be making a public comment on item 7D for the 12/2/25 City Council Meeting and wanted to share a written copy with linked citations.

Last week I received an instagram ad from an account called the “Coalition for Responsible Celebration” urging me to “Take Action!” because Alameda is considering a “balloon sales ban” and “local businesses need my help!”. I found this a little funny as this isn’t a balloon sales ban, it’s a mylar balloon sales ban, and you would think that an organization supporting responsible celebration would be supportive of choosing one of the thousands of other ways to celebrate that don’t include single-use disposable plastic in a form that is particularly dangerous to wildlife, can easily be transported into inaccessible wilderness, and wastes helium, a non-renewable resource required for medical equipment. So I decided to investigate further.

The “Coalition for Responsible Celebration” claims their mission is to “position balloons and celebration products as special and affordable ways to celebrate by promoting safe environmental product practices, driving sustainable solutions with responsible product stewardship” (<https://www.coalitionforresponsiblecelebration.org/about>). And while they do technically advocate for tying down balloons and properly disposing them after use, the majority of their online presence is instead focused on promoting balloons and targeted advertising against municipalities banning or restricting balloon use. This targeted advertising is not just something they carelessly post online to check a box, but something they actually spend money on. And they’re spending a lot of money because these ads do not stop. Where does this money come from?

While the CRC claims they support local businesses, they are instead funded by the world’s largest balloon manufacturers:

- Qualatex
- Pioneer Balloon Company
- Gemar
- Grabo Balloons
- Sempertex

All of this money is drowning out the perspectives of those who don’t have the ability to spam ads in everyone’s faces including the ratepayers of Alameda Municipal Power, marine and avian wildlife dying slow and brutal deaths, and the children and future generations who will have to live with this pollution.

Now, is this the most important agenda item the council will see this year? Probably not. But if international corporations are spending money to misinform the public and influence politics about balloons all the way down at the local level, you have to wonder what other more important topics are being influenced. Large automakers spend millions of dollars each year on superbowl ads alone, but you’ll never see a single superbowl ad for more affordable modes of transportation like bikes and public transit. It shouldn’t be a surprise that now as a result

some people believe that cars are the only “valid” mode of transportation. The housing crisis is terrible for many people struggling to afford rent, but has been extremely profitable for realtors. The largest funder of political campaigns in San Francisco’s history, the source of a whopping 10% of all campaign funding in San Francisco for the last 4 years, was founded by 2 realtor lobbyists (<https://missionlocal.org/2024/04/bigmoniesf-how-one-group-quickly-became-the-800-pound-gorilla-of-san-francisco-politics/>). Terrible decisions get made if you only listen to people who have money.

I urge this council to confirm the banning of mylar balloons, but also do a very difficult thing for every other vote you cast. Before you vote, muster up all the humility you can, and consider how advertising and big money lobbying has adversely impacted the perspective of not just the constituents who speak to you, but more importantly, your own perspective on every topic you vote upon.

Thank you,
-Mitch Ball

From: [Karly Kaufman](#)
To: [CITYCOUNCIL-List](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to mylar balloon ban
Date: Tuesday, December 2, 2025 9:40:24 AM

Good morning,

First let me say that I am an environmental scientist by training and fully aware of the environmental and infrastructure impacts associated with helium mylar balloons. I applaud efforts to make the City more environmentally friendly and prevent damage to public infrastructure.

However, I do not think this is the right approach - **the tradeoff of damage to our local businesses is not worth the environmental benefit of this ban.** This ban would just push sales elsewhere and would hurt our local businesses.

For example, there are some wonderful balloon artists in Alameda that create beautiful balloon sculptures and don't even use helium in their balloons. It is the helium balloons that cause the most damage when they escape, **it hardly seems fair to negatively impact balloon artists who are not part of the problem.**

I hope you will reconsider this total ban and look for alternatives such as public education instead. Thank you for your consideration.

Best,
Karly Kaufman
Alameda resident

December 1, 2025

Mayor Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft
Vice Mayor Michele Pryor
Councilmember Greg Boller
Councilmember Tony Daysog
Councilmember Tracy Jensen

RE: Agenda Item 7-D Recommendation to Provide Direction on an Ordinance to Ban the Sale and Distribution of Mylar Balloons in Alameda.

Dear Members of the City Council:

Community Action for a Sustainable Alameda (CASA) is a community-wide coalition dedicated to raising awareness, mobilizing community action, and facilitating the implementation of the City's Climate Action and Resiliency Plan and more generally to increase community sustainability and well-being.

We encourage the City Council to move forward to develop an ordinance to ban the sale and distribution of metallic foil (aka Mylar) balloons. In fact, we support the banning of all balloons.

- 1) According the Ocean Conservancy, [balloons are the third most deadly ocean trash](#).



- 2) Coastal communities across the state and around the country, like Alameda, have banned the sale of all balloons, including [East Hampton](#), [Encinitas](#), [Del Mar](#), [Laguna Beach](#), and [Solana Beach](#).
- 3) Metallic foil (Mylar) balloons are the [source of power outages in Alameda](#) and across the country.



Community Action for a Sustainable Alameda

- 4) Balloons are not recyclable or compostable and must be landfilled at the end of their useful life (which is very short). [Latex balloons typically last only 12–24 hours and metallic foil \(Mylar\) balloons last just 5–7 days.](#)
- 5) Alameda has been a leader in reducing plastic waste through its [Alameda Disposable Food Service Ware Reduction Law.](#)
- 6) Alameda can continue its leadership by banning the sale of all balloons, including metallic foil (Mylar) balloons.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruth Abbe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ruth Abbe, Steering Committee
Community Action for a Sustainable Alameda

From: [Sanjida Nahar](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Cc: [Duncan McFetridge](#); [Jackson McFetridge](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Updated Letter of Opposition for Tomorrow's Meeting
Date: Monday, December 1, 2025 1:48:23 PM
Attachments: [image001\[76\].png](#)
[Sign On Letter - Alameda .pdf](#)

Hello,

I hope this message finds you well. Please find attached the updated letter expressing our strong opposition to the proposed ordinance that would ban the sale and distribution of Mylar (metallic) balloons in Alameda.

We appreciate the Council's commitment to environmental stewardship and public safety, and we respectfully ask that you consider balanced alternatives to a full ban.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

Sanjida

Actum

STRATEGY EXECUTION OUTCOMES

Sanjida Nahar
Vice President
sNahar@ActumLLC.com
818 912 9055



**City of Alameda
City Council
2263 Santa Clara Avenue
Alameda, CA 94501**

December 1, 2025

Dear Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft and Members of the Alameda City Council,

We, the undersigned businesses and organizations, respectfully submit this letter to urge the Council to adopt recommendations that address foil-balloon safety without imposing a ban on their sale and distribution in Alameda. While we fully support the City’s goals of reducing powerline-related outages, protecting the grid, and advancing sustainability, we believe a sales and use ban goes further than necessary to mitigate the specific risks posed by Mylar (foil) balloons. Such an approach would unintentionally burden small businesses and limit community celebrations without measurably improving reliability compared to more targeted interventions. As retailers, employers, and community-serving organizations with deep roots in Alameda, we encourage the Council to prioritize public education, responsible-use practices, and other less restrictive strategies that directly address powerline hazards while preserving local traditions and the economic vitality of neighborhood shops.

Across our businesses, celebration products—including balloons—play an important role in supporting families, schools, small events, cultural traditions, and local gatherings. Many of us employ Alameda residents, sponsor community activities, and serve customers who depend on responsible, high-quality celebration materials.

Because safety and environmental responsibility are central to how we operate, our businesses already take meaningful steps to reduce risks. We do **not** sell or promote balloons intended for release, and retailers ensure that **every inflated foil balloon is properly weighted**, secured, and accompanied by clear guidance on safe handling and proper disposal. The vast majority of



balloon purchases in Alameda are for **indoor use**, where there is no risk of contact with power lines or other infrastructure.

For these reasons, a complete sales and distribution ban would place significant burdens on responsible local retailers and community organizations **without addressing the primary cause of incidents**—the improper release of balloons after purchase. This behavior can be addressed most effectively through education, retailer–City collaboration, and targeted public outreach, rather than through a blanket prohibition on lawful products that can and are used safely.

It is also important to recognize that the State of California has already acted decisively through AB 847, which mandates a statewide shift to non-conductive foil balloon technology. This law directly addresses the very issue at the heart of AMP’s concerns, requiring manufacturers to transition away from conductive foil balloons altogether. With a statewide phase-out already in progress, a local sales ban would duplicate existing efforts while placing disproportionate burdens on Alameda businesses.

We also have concerns that a full ban would unintentionally:

- Shift consumer purchases to retailers in neighboring cities or to unregulated online sellers,
- Reduce in-person opportunities for safety guidance at the point of sale, and
- Harm small businesses that depend on celebration products to sustain operations.

These consequences would not meaningfully reduce balloon misuse; instead, they would remove the very partners—local retailers—who are best positioned to educate the public and promote safe, responsible use.



We believe Alameda can achieve its environmental and grid-reliability goals through **more balanced and effective strategies**, including:

- A targeted **ban on intentional balloon releases**,
- City-retailer partnerships to promote safe handling and proper disposal,
- Public education campaigns addressing behaviors linked to power outages and litter, and

These approaches directly respond to the underlying causes of environmental or electrical issues while preserving community celebrations, protecting small businesses, and maintaining local consumer choice.

We welcome the opportunity to partner with the City of Alameda and Alameda Municipal Power on solutions that keep celebrations safe, protect the environment, and support a thriving local economy. Together, we can address community concerns in a way that is practical, effective, and respectful of the businesses and families who call Alameda home.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering an approach that reflects Alameda's values of sustainability, fairness, and community partnership.

Sincerely,

Maria Stockham, Executive Director
Coalition for Responsible Celebration

Jennifer Silberman, SVP Chief Sustainability Officer
Dollar Tree

Tim James, Director of Local Government Relations



California Grocers Association

Shariff Sayed, Partner On-Site
Discount City

Ingelore Dubs, Owner
Dubs Deluxe

Georgie Torres, Owner
Georgie's Party & Flowers

Erika Stolyar, Owner
Pop And Celebrate

Michelle Ando, Owner
Michelle's Balloon Twisting Decor & More

Salvador Tovar, Owner
Sparky's Balloons

Jazmyn Flowers, Owner
Balloons With A&Z

Dave Floral, Chief Commercial Officer
Mayflower Distributing

From: [Sanjida Nahar](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Cc: [Maria Stockham](#); [Duncan McFetridge](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to Proposed Mylar Balloon Sale & Use Ban — Letter Attached
Date: Tuesday, November 18, 2025 2:53:26 PM
Attachments: [image001\[23\].png](#)
[Sign On Letter - Alameda .pdf](#)

Dear Mayor Ashcraft and Councilmembers,

I hope this message finds you well. Please find attached a formal letter expressing our strong opposition to the proposed ordinance that would ban the sale and distribution of Mylar (metallic) balloons within the City of Alameda. We appreciate the Council's dedication to environmental stewardship and public safety, and we respectfully request that you consider alternatives to a full ban, such as enhanced education, targeted release restrictions, and retailer-partnering strategies.

Key points in our submitted letter include:

- The balloon ban, as currently drafted, would create significant unintended consequences for small retailers, local celebratory traditions, and low-income families who rely on affordable event supplies.
- A comprehensive ban risks shifting demand to less regulated alternatives, or driving purchases outside the city limits—negating the ordinance's intended benefits.
- We support the goals of litter reduction and safety, and believe those objectives can be met more equitably and cost-effectively through a suite of less-disruptive measures (for example: mandatory retailer signage, voluntary release prohibition zones, community clean-up programs).
- We urge the Council to extend the stakeholder engagement period, include retailers and the event-service community in dialogue, and evaluate pilot programs before enacting a full prohibition.

We stand ready to assist with outreach, educational materials, or partnership efforts to help achieve your litter-reduction and environmental-safety goals without undermining the celebratory economy or placing undue burdens on small businesses.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. We look forward to the opportunity to engage further on this important matter and appreciate your service to our city.

Actum

STRATEGY EXECUTION OUTCOMES

Sanjida Nahar

Vice President
sNahar@ActumLLC.com
818 912 9055



**City of Alameda
City Council
2263 Santa Clara Avenue
Alameda, CA 94501**

November 18, 2025

Dear Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft and Members of the Alameda City Council,

We, the undersigned businesses and organizations, respectfully submit this letter to urge the Council to adopt recommendations that address foil-balloon safety without imposing a ban on their sale and distribution in Alameda. While we fully support the City’s goals of reducing powerline-related outages, protecting the grid, and advancing sustainability, we believe a sales and use ban goes further than necessary to mitigate the specific risks posed by Mylar (foil) balloons. Such an approach would unintentionally burden small businesses and limit community celebrations without measurably improving reliability compared to more targeted interventions. As retailers, employers, and community-serving organizations with deep roots in Alameda, we encourage the Council to prioritize public education, responsible-use practices, and other less restrictive strategies that directly address powerline hazards while preserving local traditions and the economic vitality of neighborhood shops.

Across our businesses, celebration products—including balloons—play an important role in supporting families, schools, small events, cultural traditions, and local gatherings. Many of us employ Alameda residents, sponsor community activities, and serve customers who depend on responsible, high-quality celebration materials.

Because safety and environmental responsibility are central to how we operate, our businesses already take meaningful steps to reduce risks. We do **not** sell or promote balloons intended for release, and retailers ensure that **every inflated foil balloon is properly weighted**, secured, and accompanied by clear guidance on safe handling and proper disposal. The vast majority of



balloon purchases in Alameda are for **indoor use**, where there is no risk of contact with power lines or other infrastructure.

For these reasons, a complete sales and distribution ban would place significant burdens on responsible local retailers and community organizations **without addressing the primary cause of incidents**—the improper release of balloons after purchase. This behavior can be addressed most effectively through education, retailer–City collaboration, and targeted public outreach, rather than through a blanket prohibition on lawful products that can and are used safely.

It is also important to recognize that the State of California has already acted decisively through AB 847, which mandates a statewide shift to non-conductive foil balloon technology. This law directly addresses the very issue at the heart of AMP’s concerns, requiring manufacturers to transition away from conductive foil balloons altogether. With a statewide phase-out already in progress, a local sales ban would duplicate existing efforts while placing disproportionate burdens on Alameda businesses.

We also have concerns that a full ban would unintentionally:

- Shift consumer purchases to retailers in neighboring cities or to unregulated online sellers,
- Reduce in-person opportunities for safety guidance at the point of sale, and
- Harm small businesses that depend on celebration products to sustain operations.

These consequences would not meaningfully reduce balloon misuse; instead, they would remove the very partners—local retailers—who are best positioned to educate the public and promote safe, responsible use.



We believe Alameda can achieve its environmental and grid-reliability goals through **more balanced and effective strategies**, including:

- A targeted **ban on intentional balloon releases**,
- City-retailer partnerships to promote safe handling and proper disposal,
- Public education campaigns addressing behaviors linked to power outages and litter, and
- Reasonable in-store safety requirements, such as mandatory balloon weights and warning labels.

These approaches directly respond to the underlying causes of environmental or electrical issues while preserving community celebrations, protecting small businesses, and maintaining local consumer choice.

We welcome the opportunity to partner with the City of Alameda and Alameda Municipal Power on solutions that keep celebrations safe, protect the environment, and support a thriving local economy. Together, we can address community concerns in a way that is practical, effective, and respectful of the businesses and families who call Alameda home.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering an approach that reflects Alameda's values of sustainability, fairness, and community partnership.

Sincerely,

Maria Stockham, Executive Director
Coalition for Responsible Celebration

Jennifer Silberman, SVP Chief Sustainability Officer



Dollar Tree

Tim James, Director of Local Government Relations
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Shariff Sayed, Partner On-Site
Discount City

Ingelore Dubs, Owner
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Erika Stolyar, Owner
Pop And Celebrate

Michelle Ando, Owner
Michelle's Balloon Twisting Decor & More

Salvador Tovar, Owner
Sparky's Balloons

Jazmyn Flowers - Owner
Balloons With A&Z

From: [Jose Padilla](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Cc: [Jose Padilla](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Alameda Michaels Store Comments on Foil Balloon Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, November 18, 2025 11:55:44 AM

Michaels Stores, Inc.

2650 5th St
Alameda, California 94501
11/18/2025

Dear Council Members:

Michaels appreciates the opportunity to comment on Alameda’s proposed ordinance addressing the sale and distribution of foil balloons (commonly referred to as “Mylar balloons”). We share the City’s commitment to environmental sustainability and grid reliability, and we value the thoughtful approach taken by City staff and Alameda Municipal Power (AMP). At Michaels, our purpose is to fuel the joy of creativity and celebration. Our Alameda store employs local residents and serves families, teachers, and event planners who rely on high-quality celebration materials. We take our role in the community seriously. Our store does not promote balloons intended for release, and every inflated foil balloon leaving our store is secured. We provide clear guidance on safe handling and proper disposal. The vast majority of foil balloon purchases at our Alameda store are for indoor use. Accordingly, there is little to no risk of contact with overhead power lines. Foil balloons are already regulated under California state law, including mandatory weights, warning labels, and restrictions on intentional release. Looking ahead, AB 847, passed in 2022, will require that by 2027 all foil balloons sold in the state meet strict electrical safety standards. This proposed local ban duplicates those efforts is not necessary in light of the state-wide regulations, and implementing a total ban could result in unintended consequences, including:

- Reducing tax revenue and foot traffic for local businesses
- Eliminating local jobs without effectively addressing environmental concerns

In addition, banning local retailers from the sale of foil balloons will not eliminate the presence of foil balloons in Alameda. Customers will simply purchase balloons online or buy them outside of the city and bring them in. Rather than enacting a blanket sales ban, we encourage the City of Alameda to consider more targeted and collaborative approaches, such as:

- Public education campaigns promoting safe use and proper disposal
- Supporting the transition to safer, IEEE-compliant balloon products
- Enforcing existing state laws against balloon releases

At Michaels, we are committed to being part of the solution. Our teams are trained to follow state guidelines and we have signage in our stores to inform and educate customers on responsible balloon use. We urge the Council to reject this ordinance and instead partner with local retailers like us to advance practical, effective strategies that serve the needs of Alameda residents and protect both the environment and our local economy. Thank you for your leadership and for considering an approach that supports both environmental responsibility and the local businesses that serve Alameda residents.

Sincerely,
Jose Padilla
District Director, Bay Area
(M) 707-696-5856
Jose403@michaels.com

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From: [Elissa Glickman](#)
To: [City Clerk](#); [Jennifer Ott](#)
Cc: [sharif sayed](#); [Marie Ortega](#); [Abby Thorne-Lyman](#); [Dwayne Dalman](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] File #2025-5485 - Mylar Balloon Ordinances
Date: Monday, November 17, 2025 9:16:31 AM

On behalf of the West Alameda Business Association (WABA) and the businesses in our district directly affected by the proposed ordinance regarding the sale and distribution of mylar (metallic) balloons, I am writing to respectfully request further review and deeper engagement with impacted retailers before the City moves forward.

WABA received notice of this agenda item on Thursday and quickly notified the businesses in our district who would be directly affected. However, these businesses had not previously been informed of the proposed changes, nor recall much engagement for input.

Two businesses in particular stand to be significantly affected:

- Safeway (Alameda Landing location) – as a major retailer with balloon inventory and high customer volume.
- Discount City – a small, long-standing West End business whose owner reports that approximately 80% of their balloon sales are mylar balloons. This represents a core part of their revenue.

In speaking with Discount City, they expressed that while they are fully sympathetic to the environmental and infrastructure concerns surrounding metallic balloons, but were understandably concerned this proposed ordinance would have a substantial impact on their operations.

A representative from Discount City will attend tomorrow's meeting to respectfully request that the Council direct staff to revisit the ordinance and work more closely with affected businesses. Their goal is to collaboratively explore solutions that balance the very real environmental and utility challenges with policies that support economic vitality and the sustainability of both large and small retailers in our community.

For your convenience, I am cc'ing Ali and Sharif from Discount City should you wish to speak with them ahead of the meeting. Ali can also be reached by phone at 408-644-5930 (please note he is currently traveling in Spain).

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this matter. Our businesses deeply value their partnership with the City, and we look forward to a more in-depth and collaborative conversation about how to move forward in a way that meets our shared goals.

Warm regards,
Elissa Glickman
Executive Director
West Alameda Business Association (WABA)

Executive Director
West Alameda Business Association (WABA)
elissa@westalamedabusiness.com
510-523-5955