

Monterey County Board of Supervisors

Resolution

Resolution No.: 23-158

Adopt Resolution Recognizing May 2023 as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in Monterey County and Apologizing for Past Actions Taken Against the Filipino American Community in Monterey County...

WHEREAS, The month of May was chosen as Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843; and

WHEREAS, Asian American and Pacific Islanders have made indelible contributions to the history of California and the United States that include, but are not limited to, building the Transcontinental Railroad, serving honorably in the Armed Forces, fighting for the United States in foreign wars, co-organizing the Delano Grape Strike, and advocating for civil rights; and

WHEREAS, Asian American and Pacific Islanders continue to cultivate, advance, and lead in the fields of art, fashion, business, technology, education, science, government, law, humanities, medicine, sports, and entertainment, to name a few; and

WHEREAS, California is home to over 6,300,000 Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, more than any other state, and there are over 25,000 Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders who live in Monterey County; and

WHEREAS, Celebrating Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month provides Californians with an opportunity to recognize the achievements, contributions, and history of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans; and

WHEREAS, Asian American and Pacific Islanders have endured hardships, including unjust working conditions, prejudice, and discrimination in some of the darkest times in our state's and nation's history, including the Chinese Exclusion Act, naturalized citizenship ineligibility, the Alien Land Law, anti-miscegenation laws, and the Japanese American internment; and

WHEREAS, On January 19, 1930, the most explosive anti-Filipino riot occurred in Watsonville where Filipinos were relentlessly harassed, and the riot culminated in the killing of 22-year old Fermin Tobera at Murphey's Crossing Labor Camp. Anti-Filipino riots quickly spread throughout California, including Stockton, San Francisco, San Jose and also Salinas on September 22, 1934; and

WHEREAS, The Northern Monterey Chamber of Commerce adopted an anti-Filipino resolution proclaiming that Filipinos were undesirable, depressed the wage scale of other nationalities, possessed unhealthy habits, and brought disease. The resolution, written by local Judge Daniel W. Rohrback of Pajaro, was introduced on December 6, 1929, and was passed on January 8, 1930, with copies sent to the Monterey County Board of Supervisors; and

WHEREAS, On January 24, 1930, the Monterey Peninsula Herald had a front-page editorial that decried the anti-Filipino violence and lawlessness and called Judge Rohrback's resolution as "the matter that seemed most to encourage the lawless and vindictive in taking open mob action"; and

WHEREAS, The Tobera Project, based in Watsonville, educates and raises awareness of the plight, struggles, vitality and contributions of the Manong generation who first settled into the Pajaro Valley in the early 1920s, including the tragic killing of Fermin Tobera and its aftermath; and

WHEREAS, The Filipino Community of Salinas Valley is located at 250 Calle Cebu in Salinas and brings together the Filipino American community through numerous activities and events held throughout the year; and

WHEREAS, The Asian Cultural Experience (ACE) is a non-profit organization based in Salinas whose goal is to preserve the history and culture of Salinas' Chinatown and organizes the annual Asian Festival in Chinatown.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT AND RESOLVED, That the Monterey County Board of Supervisors, on behalf of the County and all residents thereof, declares May 2023 as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in Monterey County, which provides our residents with an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the achievements, contributions, cultures, and rich history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in our county and beyond.

PASSED AND ADOPTED on this 9th day of May 2023



Supervisor Mary L. Adams

Supervisor Luis A. Alejo, Chair

Supervisor Glenn Church, Vice Chair

Supervisor Chris Lopez

Supervisor Wendy Root Askew