



CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH

City Council Meeting – Council Member Items Report

To: City Council
From: Mayor McKeon
Date: April 21, 2026
Subject: **DECLARATION OF MAY 7, 2026 AS THEODORE ROOSEVELT DAY IN HUNTINGTON BEACH**

ISSUE STATEMENT

This proposal recommends designating May 7, 2026 as Theodore Roosevelt Day in Huntington Beach, California. The date marks the anniversary of Theodore Roosevelt's first visit to California in 1903 during his well-known nine-week "Great Loop" tour—one of the most memorable presidential journeys in American history.

The year 1903 is also notable for several milestones in American history, including the Wright brothers' first flight, the first World Series, and the introduction of the teddy bear, named after Roosevelt.

Historical Significance

May 7, 1903 is meaningful for several reasons:

- 1. First Official Recognition**
This would be the first time a city in California officially sets aside a day to honor Theodore Roosevelt, whose impact on conservation and national parks is still felt today.
- 2. Connection to Huntington Beach's Beginnings**
In that same month in 1903, Henry Huntington purchased Pacific City, which eventually became Huntington Beach. This shared timing creates a strong historical link between Roosevelt's visit and the city's founding.
- 3. Influence on Conservation**
During his 1903 trip, Roosevelt spent three days camping in Yosemite with naturalist John Muir. That experience helped shape his commitment to conservation and the protection of public lands.
- 4. A Deeper Historical Connection**
The story of Yosemite's preservation goes back to Abraham Lincoln in 1864, influenced by photographer Carleton Watkins. Watkins had ties to Collis Huntington, whose railroad was later passed on to Henry Huntington. These connections highlight how local and national history are closely linked.

It's also worth noting that in the 1930s, the Pacific Coast Highway running through Huntington Beach was named Roosevelt Highway in his honor. Designating May 7 as

Theodore Roosevelt Day would help reconnect with that history and encourage continued appreciation for conservation and environmental stewardship.

Recognizing this day would honor Roosevelt's legacy while also tying into the celebration of the nation's 250th anniversary.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Request staff bring forth a resolution at the May 5, 2026 City Council meeting declaring May 7, 2026 as Theodore Roosevelt Day in Huntington Beach.