

-EXTERNAL-

Dear Ms. De La Garza,

Thank you for reading my comments and for your service to our great city. I request you forward my comments to our mayor, Dr. Robert Garcia, our City Council Members, and anyone else you believe appropriate.

I was a teacher at Covina High School when our mayor was a student. Although I never had the pleasure to have him in class, I believe he was in my brother's Spanish class. My brother and I are both now Long Beach residents, and my brother, Ted Hollister, is now a National Board Certified Teacher at Long Beach Wilson High School. Like Dr. Garcia, I also earned an Ed.D. at the University of Southern California and I watch his many good and progressive works with a tremendous amount of pride.

Each of the many times I passed the PRIDE lifeguard station on my bike ride along the beach path, I was filled with a sense of joy, love, and optimism and so proud of the City in which I have chosen to live. Seeing it burned down last night was like a punch in the gut and a reminder of all the hate that surrounds us. Unfortunately, 2020, and now 2021, have brought us too many reminders of how much people in our community, and our world around us, hate those that are different from them because of their race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, and/or age.

Our differences are what make us each uniquely beautiful and it is our uniqueness that we all commonly share. I humbly request that our City of Long Beach, a city that has demonstrated a willingness to embrace diversity and civil rights for all, not only re-build and repaint the lifeguard station that was destroyed, but to rebuild and repaint ALL the lifeguard stations in the City in ways that represent, symbolize, and celebrate the diverse and multicultural community of Long Beach. This would be a statement to the vandals who destroyed the lifeguard station, and also to the community and our worldwide audience, that our LOVE is stronger than HATE and that our progress towards creating a community where everyone is safe and represented is worth fighting for.

I am sure Dr. Garcia and the City leadership can think of many ways in which to make this happen while building community faith and spirit, but just in case, I have ideas as well. The City of Long Beach has plenty of resources to fund this project, but invite residents, community organizations, and local businesses to sponsor and join in this cause. Put out the call for local artists to apply to paint lifeguard stations and have them submit designs for what they envision to create. Hire these and/or other professional artists to paint lifeguard stations that each have their own unique design, and each will represent a unique facet of the beauty and diversity that is Long Beach.

Repair all the lifeguard stations and repaint them all on a single day that the City Council designates and then do it in a loud and proud event so that the world will see that the City of Long Beach not only won't back down, but we will stand up for our entire community in a unified and powerful show of love, inclusion, and pride.

Public Comment Correspondence- Christopher Hollister

I am excited to be part of this in any way that you feel appropriate.

I appreciate if you will acknowledge receipt of these comments. and I thank you for all you do for me and the LBC.

Respectfully,
Christopher Hollister