



**Adena Ishii**, Mayor

**Igor Tregub**, Councilmember District 4

**Terry Taplin**, Councilmember District 2

**Shoshana O’Keefe**, Councilmember District 5

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmembers Igor Tregub (Author), Shoshana O’Keefe (Co-Sponsor), Terry Taplin (Co-Sponsor), and Mayor Adena Ishii (Co-Sponsor)

Subject: Relinquishment of Council Office Budget Funds from General Funds and Grant of Such Funds to Bay Area Robotics Education Sustainability Alliance for the 2025 Berkeley High Robotics Team’s East Bay Regional Robotics Competition.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Adopt a Resolution approving the expenditure of an amount not to exceed \$250 per member of the City Council from the D13 Discretionary Accounts of members of the Berkeley City Council, including \$250 from Mayor Ishii and Councilmembers O’Keefe, Taplin, and Tregub, and inviting other members of the City Council to contribute, to support the Berkeley High Robotics Team (Berkelium 5419<sup>1</sup>) in hosting the East Bay Regional FIRST<sup>2</sup> Robotics Competition<sup>3</sup>. Funds will be transferred to the City’s general fund and to Bay Area Robotics Education Sustainability Alliance, a fiscal agent for the 2025 Berkeley High Robotics Team’s East Bay Regional Robotics Competition to support this valuable community event.

The relinquishment of funds from the respective discretionary Council Office Budgets of such members of the Berkeley City Council who wish to contribute will support this important initiative, fostering STEM education, student leadership, and international collaboration.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://team5419.wixsite.com/team5419>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.firstinspires.org/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://cafirst.org/frc/east-bay-regional/#>

## **BACKGROUND**

The East Bay Regional FIRST Robotics Competition<sup>4</sup>, hosted annually by the Berkeley High Robotics Team (Berkelium 5419<sup>5</sup>), is a premier science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) event that brings together high school robotics teams from across California, the nation, and around the globe. This year, 56 teams were competing in the exciting "Reefscape" challenge at Berkeley High School, drawing students, mentors, parents, and supporters from all corners of the world.

The competition offers an unparalleled opportunity for students to engage in hands-on learning, collaboration, and friendly competition in the STEM fields. The event highlights the talents and innovations of over 80 student members of the Berkeley High Robotics Team, which is entirely student-run with invaluable guidance from volunteer mentors.

As a student-led team without the backing of corporate sponsors or paid mentors, Berkelium 5419 faces unique financial challenges. To ensure the event's success and maintain its high standards, the team is working to raise \$15,000-\$20,000 to cover essential costs such as event logistics, equipment, and travel expenses for both local and international teams.

The Berkeley High Robotics Team also proudly hosts participants from Hawaii, as well as other countries like Turkey, Japan, Australia, further elevating the event's prestige and showcasing the City of Berkeley's commitment to fostering global STEM education. This event not only provides a transformative educational experience but also serves as a point of pride for the community, drawing positive attention to Berkeley as a leader in STEM innovation and collaboration.

## **CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS**

The escalating costs of hosting the East Bay Regional FIRST Robotics competition have put significant financial pressure on the Berkeley High Robotics Team. These costs include expenses for the venue, essential equipment, safety measures, and travel for both local and international teams. In order to ensure the event's continued success and to provide ongoing STEM opportunities to Berkeley students, additional funding is crucial to cover the following needs:

- Event logistics and venue rental;
- Materials and equipment required for competition setup;
- Travel expenses for participating teams; and

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<sup>4</sup> <https://team5419.wixsite.com/team5419/support-us>

- Support for both local and international teams, enhancing the event's diversity and scope

As the Berkeley High Robotics Team operates independently and is not categorized as a formal school "club," it does not receive regular funding from the school district. Therefore, financial support from the City Council is vital to the successful hosting of this prestigious event and to ensuring that students from all backgrounds continue to benefit from these valuable educational experiences.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

No General Fund impact. Up to \$250 is available from contributing Mayor's and Councilmembers' Council Office Budget discretionary accounts.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

#1 Resolution

### **CONTACT PERSON**

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**RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.**

**AUTHORIZING THE EXPENDITURE OF SURPLUS FUNDS FROM THE OFFICE EXPENSE ACCOUNTS OF COUNCILMEMBERS FOR A GRANT TO SUPPORT THE BERKELEY HIGH ROBOTICS TEAM'S EAST BAY REGIONAL FIRST ROBOTICS COMPETITION**

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Ishii and Councilmembers O'Keefe, Taplin, and Tregub have surplus funds in their D13 discretionary office expenditure account and will contribute \$250, and invite other Councilmembers to join in contributing; and

**WHEREAS**, the Berkeley High Robotics Team, "Berkelium 5419," is a fully student-led team competing in the prestigious FIRST Robotics international league, dedicated to fostering innovation, teamwork, and STEM education among high school students; and

**WHEREAS**, from April 3-6, 2025, Berkelium 5419, along with their newly established Freshman team, "Bearingium 5499," hosted the East Bay Regional FIRST Robotics Competition at Berkeley High School, attracting 56 teams from across California and Hawaii, and the world, including international teams from Turkey, Japan, Australia, to compete in the "Reefscape" challenge; and

**WHEREAS**, this event brings recognition and prestige to Berkeley High School and the City of Berkeley, highlighting student achievements and fostering collaboration among local and international teams; and

**WHEREAS**, the successful execution of this large-scale competition requires additional funding to cover logistics, materials, equipment, and operational expenses, with an estimated funding need of \$15,000 to \$20,000; and

**WHEREAS**, as a student-run team without school district funding, the Berkeley High Robotics Team relies on community donations, sponsorships, and fundraising to cover costs associated with participation and event hosting; and

**WHEREAS**, the provision of such funding fulfills the municipal public purpose of supporting science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, youth leadership, and community engagement through a high-profile, student-led competition;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Council of the City of Berkeley that funds relinquished by the Mayor and Councilmembers from their discretionary office budgets, up to \$250 per office, shall be granted to Bay Area Robotics Education Sustainability Alliance for the 2025 Berkeley High Robotics to support the successful hosting of the East Bay Regional FIRST Robotics Competition.