

Rudy Cruz Jr
Mayor

Ruben Reyes
At Large

Cesar Nevarez
District 1/Mayor Pro-Tem



Alejandro Garcia
District 2

Gina Cordero
District 3

Irene Rojas
District 4

Adriana Rodarte
City Manager

ORDINANCE NO. 658

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SOCORRO, TEXAS, ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS FOR THE USE, TREATMENT, AND DISPOSAL OF PECAN SHELLS, ALMOND HULLS, AND SIMILAR MATERIALS TO PREVENT PEST INFESTATION; PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE; AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the City of Socorro is committed to maintaining the health, safety, and welfare of its residents; and

WHEREAS, the presence of certain pests, such as red flour beetles, poses a threat to the environment, public health, and the integrity of landscaping within the City; and

WHEREAS, agricultural byproducts such as pecan shells, almond hulls, and similar organic materials are known to attract or harbor pests if not properly treated; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to regulate the use and treatment of such byproducts to prevent the proliferation of pest infestations within the City;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOCORRO, TEXAS, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this ordinance is to establish rules for the proper use, treatment, and disposal of materials that may attract or harbor pests, including but not limited to pecan shells, almond hulls, and similar materials, in order to combat and prevent infestations of red flour beetles and other pests.

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this ordinance, the following definitions shall apply:

- **"Agricultural Byproducts"** means discarded organic materials from the raising of plants or animals as part of agricultural, horticultural or viticultural operations including, but not limited to pecan shells, almond hulls, or other organic matter that has the potential to attract or harbor pests.

- **"Proper Treatment"** means non-toxic methods approved by federal and state regulatory agencies, and approved by the City of Socorro including, but not limited to sterilization, fumigation, or other pest-control techniques as determined by the City Manager or their designee.
- **"Insect"** means any numerous arthropod animals of the class *Insecta*, having an adult stage characterized by three pairs of legs and a body segmented into head, thorax, and abdomen and usually having one or two pairs of wings. Insects include, without limitation, flies, crickets, mosquitos, roaches, beetles, and bees.
- **"Rodent"** means any of various mammals of the order *Rodentia*, such as a mouse, rat or squirrel characterized by large incisors used for gnawing or nibbling.
- **"Pest"** means any insect or rodent, or a combination of the two, that pose or create a public health, environmental or economic risk including, but is not limited to red flour beetles or any other insects or organisms deemed detrimental by the City.

SECTION 3. PROHIBITION AND REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Prohibited Actions

- The use of untreated byproducts such as pecan shells, almond hulls, or other materials known to attract or harbor pests for landscaping, gardening, or any other purpose is prohibited within the City of Socorro.

3.2 Treatment Requirements

- All byproducts intended for ground use must be properly treated to eliminate the risk of pest infestation. Treatment methods must comply with guidelines established by the City of Socorro.

3.3 Certification and Documentation

- Individuals or businesses using such byproducts must maintain documentation certifying that the materials have been properly treated. This documentation must be made available to City officials upon request.

SECTION 4. INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT

- The City Manager, Code Enforcement Officers, or other authorized personnel are empowered to inspect properties to ensure compliance with this ordinance.
- Properties found in violation will be subject to penalties as outlined in Section 5.

SECTION 5. PENALTIES

- A violation of this ordinance shall constitute a Class C misdemeanor and may result in a fine not exceeding \$500 per offense. Each day a violation continues shall be considered a separate offense.
- In addition to fines, the City may require the immediate removal or proper treatment of non-compliant byproducts at the owner's expense.

SECTION 6. EXEMPTIONS

- Compost materials properly managed and monitored to prevent pest attraction may be exempted from this ordinance upon approval by the City Manager or their designee.

SECTION 7. PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

The City of Socorro shall implement an educational program to inform residents and businesses about the risks of untreated materials and proper pest-control practices.

SECTION 8. SEVERABILITY

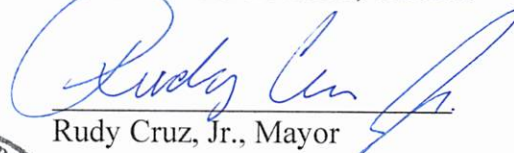
If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a decision of any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance.

SECTION 9. EFFECTIVE DATE


This ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its passage and publication as required by law.

PASSED AND APPROVED at a regular meeting of the City Council of Socorro, Texas, on this 16th day of January, 2025.

CITY OF SOCORRO, TEXAS

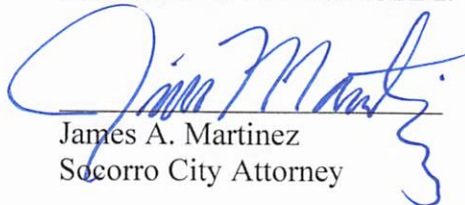

Rudy Cruz, Jr., Mayor

ATTEST:


Olivia Navarro, City Clerk



APPROVED AS TO FORM:


James A. Martinez
Socorro City Attorney

Introduction and First Reading: January 2, 2025
Second Reading and Adoption: January 16, 2025