

December 15, 2020



The Honorable Robert Garcia  
Mayor, City of Long Beach  
411 West Ocean Blvd., 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Long Beach, CA 90802

RE: Hazard Pay for Grocery Workers

Dear Mayor Garcia,

On behalf of Long Beach grocers, I write with concerns about the recommendation regarding hazard pay to grocery workers. Our industry shares your appreciation for critical infrastructure employees across the grocery spectrum. This is why grocery companies were at the forefront of implementing COVID-19 safety protocols, before being asked to do so, and have been leaders in providing additional compensation to employees.

Unfortunately, the current recommendation and accompanying discussion submitted as part of the agenda item is missing important information and uses data not applicable to Long Beach or which is inaccurate or outdated. Without consultation with the grocery industry to provide additional information, we are concerned Council will make policy decisions based on flawed information and reasoning.

The impact of a less than fully informed decision will result in unintended and avoidable negative consequences for the City and grocers. This issue is best served by an immediate and genuine discussion with the grocery industry, not the mere hours of notice coupled with a threat of action provided to the industry.

In addition to the concerns above, the recommendation limits its scope to only a small subset of essential critical infrastructure workers and ignores all other workers interacting regularly with the public in the same manner. As we all sadly know, COVID-19 impacts do not discriminate in any way. If a situation has risen to an emergency level in one work setting it would only be reasonable to assume the same concern exists in other similar settings with other critical infrastructure employees.

COVID-19 and its impacts are nothing short of a tragedy and have required a number of emergency responses. For the last ten months, the grocery industry, often in partnership with state and local governments, has implemented unprecedented efforts to ensure the safety of our employees and consumers. These efforts include implementing social distancing protocols, expansive leave for workers impacted by COVID-19, record levels of additional compensation, hiring of new workers numbering in the tens of thousands in Los Angeles County alone, and remaining open with a still impacted and limited supply chain.

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CGA and the grocery industry have partnered with Long Beach successfully on several emergency issues during the pandemic. Unfortunately, on this specific issue the city has chosen not to engage the grocery industry or provide any reasoning or justification to raise this issue to the point of requiring the extraordinary powers granted by the City's declaration of emergency. Again, the best course of action is an immediate and genuine consultation with the grocery industry. Failing this we believe there are significant policy and legal concerns and ask the City not to move forward with the recommendation as proposed.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to a continued partnership with Long Beach to combat COVID-19.

Sincerely,



Tim James  
California Grocers Association

CC: Members, Long Beach City Council  
Mr. Tom Modica, City Manager, City of Long Beach  
Ms. Monique De La Garza, CMC, City Clerk, City of Long Beach