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Testimony by the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce
and Long Beach Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce
Long Beach City Council Hearing

Including LGBT, Disability, and Veteran-owned firms in Long Beach Economic Opportunities

On behalf of the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce, **it's local affiliate in the region the** Long Beach Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, and the more than 1.4 million LGBT business owners NGLCC represents in the United States and around the world as the sole certifying body for LGBT Business Enterprises, I thank the Council for their leadership today in expanding Long Beach contracting and economic development opportunities to include LGBT persons, persons with a disability, and veterans. This is an economically and socially essential issue, which is first and foremost about the economic development of Long Beach and growing its diverse business communities. Passage of such a policy would make Long Beach the FIRST city in California to intentionally include these communities in such a powerful way.

The rationale for this policy request is simple: our economy cannot achieve its full potential without the full participation of every citizen of Long Beach and the surrounding region. Greater diversity among suppliers encourages greater innovation and competition. Greater competition lowers bid prices. Lower bid prices results in millions of dollars in taxpayers savings across Long Beach. Having helped usher in this kind of inclusive economic policy across Fortune 500 and the public sector, we join NGLCC and its partners



to help this committee and this city ensure such inclusion is **revenue neutral and free of additional red tape** that is cumbersome to small business development.

In 2018 and early 2019, NGLCC won the inclusion of LGBTBEs in Orlando, FL; Nashville, TN; Baltimore, MD; Jersey City, NJ; and Hoboken, NJ, while also advancing statewide bills in New York and New Jersey. Currently, California, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania also include certified LGBT-owned businesses statewide in various programs, as do major cities like Seattle, Newark, Columbus, and Philadelphia. **It's time for Long Beach to join this list and lead.**

Discrimination and lack of inclusion is not only **morally wrong; it's** antithetical to the pro-business climate for which California is renowned. At this very moment, LGBT owned, disability owned, and veteran owned businesses are providing top quality goods and services—from personnel to paving stones-- at extremely competitive prices to many of the prime contractors we use every day. They deserve the fair and equal chance to win those contracts outright.

It is extremely important to note that including LGBTBEs and other communities named in this bill will not detract or diminish the contracting opportunities for our friends already in the diverse business community.

In January of 2017, NGLCC released a groundbreaking, first ever analysis of the economic impact of LGBT business owners in America. Each year LGBT-owned businesses add \$1.7 trillion dollars to the economy. They create lasting businesses that employ tens of thousands of Americans. They diversify local economies and make our cities more attractive to investment.

It's the tax revenue created by LGBT, disability, and veteran owned businesses that help pay for the billions spent on California contracts, including right here at home. Opening them up to our communities is simply a matter of fairness and will cement Long Beach as a



statewide leader in economic opportunity, expanding contracting opportunities and allowing *all* diverse communities in California to thrive.

And I stress, and will continue to stress, *all* communities. To paraphrase Justin Nelson, the President and Co-Founder of **NGLCC**, **"when it comes to inclusion, there is no "us against them" – no more "the pie isn't big enough" –** because we all know the pie is as big as we collectively want to bake it! When communities of color do better, so do we. When women do better, so do we. When people with disabilities do better, so do we! And when we do better, so do they.

It's time for Long Beach, a respected leader in business, diversity, and opportunity, to take its place as one of the most inclusive cities for minority-owned business in America. I assure you the growth here among new small businesses will astound you. Following the **implementation of the California's AB1678 business inclusion law**, there was a dramatic spike in the number certified LGBTBEs in California—resulting in a more than 2300% increase in LGBT businesses in the state in the first year. We know that can and will happen here locally in Long Beach.

Strong, modernized, and fully-inclusive WMBE and Supplier Diversity programs prove every day to corporations, governments, and communities that bringing everything we are to everything we do makes us more competitive as businesses, more confident as business people, more connected as a business community, and more successful as an economy.

We are excited to soon count Long Beach among those who believe in the power of inclusion not just as the right thing to do, but also as an economic imperative that benefits every citizen of the state. Our economy will be more inclusive and successful thanks to your leadership; leadership which our communities are seeking more than ever in these uncertain political times. We look forward to announcing soon that Long Beach, and the cities who follow are example, are open for business to everyone who lives here.