



Date: March 17, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor Robert Garcia and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Rex Richardson
Councilmember Roberto Uranga
Councilmember Jeannine Pearce
Councilmember Mary Zendejas

Subject: **Coronavirus Economic Relief Package for Long Beach Families and Small Businesses**

RECOMMENDATION:

Request the City Attorney to draft an urgency ordinance and minute order for consideration at the next City Council meeting, to establish a moratorium on all evictions on commercial and residential units for a minimum of 30 days, or as long as the City of Long Beach, Los Angeles County, or the State of California have active emergency proclamations related to COVID-19. The ordinance should also include a prohibition on late fees and a prohibition on Section 8 terminations by the Housing Authority of Long Beach (HACLB) for the duration of this period.

Further, request the City Manager to work with the Department of Energy Resources, the Water Department and investor-owned utilities (IOUs) to suspend utility shutoffs for a minimum of 30 days or until emergency proclamations are no longer in effect, whichever is longer.

Furthermore, request the City Manager to work with the City Attorney to establish an ordinance during the duration of the declaration of emergency requiring all airport, convention center, and hotel employer allow all employees to wash their hands every 30 minutes to limit community transmission.

And lastly, request the City Manager to work with the City Attorney, and all relevant Departments, to evaluate the feasibility of implementing an economic relief package for working families and small businesses impacted by the COVID-19.

This package should explore the following:

1. A review of sick and disability leave processes and enhancements for City employees, who must miss work due to COVID-19,
2. Explore TOT, or other revenue sharing opportunities, to support hotels that experience significant economic impact due to COVID-19.
3. Partnerships with financial institutions and lenders to prohibit foreclosures or halt mortgage payments for individuals who have suffered loss of wages as a result of COVID-19,
4. Streamlined processes or resources through partnerships with EDD to support workers laid off or impacted by COVID-19, and explore support for impacted workers not covered by unemployment benefits,
5. Emergency loan assistance programs to small businesses who have suffered significant loss, as a result of COVID-19,
6. Potential resources and partnerships to safely assist people under self-quarantine, due to COVID-19, with a priority on seniors,
7. Extend training opportunities with the Long Beach Public Health Department on COVID-19 prevention to businesses in the tourism and restaurant industry,
8. Relief for laid-off or furloughed workers in the affected industries such as hospitality including, but not limited to, a "right of return" and "layoff and recall" policy, that protects workers from being laid off and subsequently not given preference when re-hiring commences, and
9. A worker retention or just cause for termination policy, in the hospitality industry, to protect workers through potential bankruptcy or subcontracting that could occur during an active emergency proclamation related to COVID-19.

Discussion

The international outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has caused governments and organizations across the globe to take major steps to prevent widespread community transmission. On March 4, 2020, California Governor Newsom declared a State of Emergency to make additional resources available and prepare emergency actions for state agencies and departments in response to the spread of the virus. The City of Long Beach also took action as the City Public Health Officer issued a Declaration of Local Health Emergency, and the Acting City Manager issued a Proclamation of Local Emergency.

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness, thought to spread from person-to-person (within 6 feet), primarily via droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath, as outcomes for infected individuals range from mild sickness to severe illness and death.

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus a global pandemic, due to significant spread in multiple countries around the world. To date, over 1700 positive test results of COVID-19 have been confirmed in the United States, with over 150 in the State of California. The City of Long Beach has detected 4 positive results, 8 negative results, and 6 pending results, as approximately 70 persons are currently being monitored. Recently the City has expanded on further guidance issued by Governor Newsom by canceling or postponing events with an estimated attendance of 250 or more. This was made official on March 12th when Long Beach Health Officer, Dr Anissa Davis, signed a declaration that prohibits all large-scale events in the city.

Efforts to contain further spread of the virus have resulted in the cancellation of large gatherings and events. Higher education institutions have announced plans to suspend and transition in-person, on-campus classes to aid in the recommended "social distancing," and many employers have offered additional sick time, as employees have been asked to self-quarantine, working from home, and in some instances, work less hours.

Working families are seeing reduced or eliminated paychecks, while rent continues to come due. The City has a responsibility to act urgently in this fast-moving crisis to prevent thousands of families from facing eviction and homelessness. Service workers, gig economy workers, retail workers, small business workers and port workers are just some of the categories of Long Beach working families who will be unable to pay their rent and utilities due to the coronavirus pandemic. Preventing evictions and utility shutoffs is necessary not only to protect renters, but to protect all Long Beach residents from the spread of the coronavirus.

This past week, the city of San Jose adopted a 30-day moratorium on evictions as a result of loss of income to renters due to the coronavirus. San Francisco Supervisors are considering similar legislation. The City of Los Angeles is considering even broader renter protections at its Council meeting on March 17, 2020, and we can expect more cities to adopt urgency ordinances as this crisis continues to worsen.

As a majority renter city, where over half the population's renters spend more than 30% of their income on rent, and nearly 7,000 families rely on Section 8 vouchers from the Housing Authority to pay their rent, Long Beach must align itself with other jurisdictions working on proactive measures to protect its seniors, families, workers, and entrepreneurs during this crisis. To mitigate the anticipated economic impacts COVID-19 has on the local economy, Council consideration is needed to approve a comprehensive economic relief package to support Long Beach families and small businesses.

Fiscal Impact

No Financial Management review was able to be conducted due to the urgency and time sensitivity of this item.

Statement of Urgency

Due to current state of emergency, we ask that this item be presented and available for review at the March 17th Council Meeting.



City of Long Beach Memorandum
Working Together to Serve



REQUEST TO ADD AGENDA ITEM

Date: March 13, 2020
To: Monique DelaGarza, City Clerk
From: Councilmember Rex Richardson, Ninth District
Subject: Request to Add Agenda Item to Council Agenda of March 17, 2020

Pursuant to Municipal Code Section 2.03.070 [B], the City Councilmembers signing below request that the attached agenda item (due in the City Clerk Department by Friday, 12:00 Noon) be placed on the City Council agenda under New Business via the supplemental agenda.

The agenda title/recommendation for this item reads as follows:

Coronavirus Economic Relief Package for Long Beach Families and Small Businesses

Council District	Authorizing Councilmember	Signed by
9	Rex Richardson	
7	Roberto Uranga	
2	Jeannine Pearce	