

Extending Further Support for the COVID-19 Outbreaks in the City of Vernon

The City of Vernon (Vernon) is an industrial city of 5.2 square miles located in Southeast Los Angeles (SELA) and is home to approximately 250 residents and almost 2,000 businesses that employ 54,000 people. Most workers commute from other nearby working-class, heavily-Latinx populated communities, and there are now growing concerns that COVID-19 outbreaks in industrial facilities located in Vernon will spread into other cities including South Gate, Huntington Park, and Bell, where we have seen the disparate impact COVID-19 has had since the beginning of the pandemic. To that end, further protections and safety measures are needed to ensure our residents and workers at industrial facilities, and other businesses in Vernon, including factories and plants are protected.

According to a recent survey report on the impact of COVID-19 on SELA residents, which was issued by the SELA Collaborative, in partnership with the California Community Foundation, Pat Brown Institute for Public Affairs at Cal State LA and Latino Decisions, several community members expressed that they are still working

MOTION

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outside of their home. Of critical note, the survey revealed that many SELA residents continue to report to work in the following sectors: 18% in the food service industry, 12% in health care, and 12% in janitorial/cleaning services. Furthermore, nearly 1 in 4 do not feel safe due to lack of equipment and/or workplace procedures.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) recently published a report on June 2, 2020 in response to a motion approved by the LA County Board of Supervisors, where DPH and the City of Vernon's Health and Environmental Control Department evaluated responses to the outbreaks in industrial facilities. The report outlined that 157 infected workers have been identified as residents of LA County, two of which live in San Bernardino County. Furthermore, it included plans and efforts by facility operators to further protect workers against COVID-19, including: offering COVID-19 testing for all employees that want to get tested and providing paid sick leave to workers..

Vernon's Health and Environmental Control Department was the only public health department in the State of California without a physician health officer prior to June 15, 2020. On June 16, 2020, the Vernon City Council adopted Resolution No. 2020-22 ratifying the appointment of a Health Officer for the City of Vernon – a former LA County health consulting physician. We need to ensure that the County continues to work with City of Vernon if the responsibilities are to shift over to the newly appointed Health Officer for Vernon. Cities are required to appoint a health officer or make arrangement by contracting with a County to have the Health Officer perform services around regulation. DPH has continued to work with the City of Vernon to help ensure workers and employees are aware of testing resources in the community and that

workers have access to information about the COVID-19 virus. We now need to ensure that our surrounding communities and their residents are also protected against COVID-19

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors instruct the Department of Public Health in collaboration with City of Vernon's Health and Environmental Control Department to:

1. Work with Cal/OSHA and our labor partners to identify strategies needed moving forward to ensure residents and workers in the City of Vernon as well as those residents in the surrounding communities are informed of COVID-related resources.
2. Coordinate with Cal/OSHA to establish and/or strengthen a standardized notification protocol.
3. Report back to the Board with the findings and recommendations in 14 days.

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