



April 18, 2021

RE: Agenda Item 5A - MEASURES TO PROTECT HOSPITALITY (HOTEL) WORKERS

Honorable Mayor and City Council Members,

On behalf of the West Hollywood Chamber and its Hotel Council, we are writing to you to express our concerns with item 5A on the current City Council Agenda which contains serious outright and indirect allegations against the city's hotels without any substantiated evidence.

This directive to staff, with vague instructions to draft an ordinance, which by reference to the Santa Monica example would contain regulations that represent a complete invasion of businesses' right to operate under federal and state labor laws. Further, it is extremely disappointing that none of the hotels were consulted prior to setting this on the agenda nor was this included into our recent Small Business Roundtable agendas. It is additionally disheartening that we, as a business community, are subject to more fear and anxiety from our own city council, at a time when they need your trust and support not more worry and trepidation, as they struggle to bring their businesses to full operation during such a vulnerable time. Lastly, it is deeply alarming that the optics of this action, taking into account the facts noted above, could symbolize the hijacking of this council by special interest groups whose political agendas do not protect nor benefit this city's residents and businesses.

We understand the concerns of worker's safety which have been of paramount importance to our businesses and hotels, even prior to the pandemic. This is why we whole-heartedly and voluntarily supported panic devices to ensure safety of our hotel workers over a year prior.

Instead of directing staff to write an ordinance at this time, we propose the following items below for consideration:

- Issue a Moratorium on drafting any local labor or minimum wage laws, so long as emergency orders remain in place, with an additional six months to allow for industry to recover from the massive losses incurred in 2020 and 2021. Given the current restrictions of resources and time in regard to city staff and the ever-evolving regulations needed to stay current on managing pandemic on a local level, this pause would also facilitate the city's bandwidth to address immediate resident concerns. These issues include rising levels of homelessness affecting our neighborhoods and business districts, availability and ease of access of vaccines to all populations, and to understand the scope of assistance needed to assist vulnerable populations with when residential rent moratoriums conclude.

- Use the time during the Moratorium to conduct a complete Inquiry, led by the Small Business Task Force or the Human Services Commission, into the city's hospitality sector. The purpose of this inquiry would be to validate the serious allegations included in 5A which claims, "problematic workplace environments", and "onerous workloads and reports of unreasonable and undefined working conditions/expectations on performance" as the purpose for the ordinance.
- Take the findings of the Inquiry and use as the agenda for a Small Business Roundtable sponsored by the Small Business Task Force in which dialogue between all stakeholders may be used as a mechanism to draft possible recommendation for future consideration.
- Mandate that the West Hollywood Hotel Council report back to the City with its implementation of the "West Hollywood 5 Star Promise" through reporting to the Business License Commission within three (3) months, noting all progress as well as concerns with a formal report prepared for Council review.

Please note that our West Hollywood hotels have taken extensive efforts to always protect the welfare of their employees and guests, not just over the last twelve months of the pandemic in which extraordinary measures were mandated. Their efforts already supported safety training and tools, such as personal notification devices (panic buttons), to ensure a safe work environment for hotel employees.

You should also be aware that West Hollywood hotels currently operate under California state laws and regulations that mandate hotel health and safety practices including:

- Musculoskeletal Injury Prevention Programs (MIPP)
- Exposure Control Plans for Bloodborne Pathogens
- Safety plans for natural disasters - fires and earthquake, as well as active shooter training.

The State of California also enacted laws that require annual safety training regarding:

- Sexual Assault and Harassment Prevention (AB-1825 and AB-1343)
- Human Trafficking Prevention (SB-970)6

In conclusion, we believe that the alternatives proposed above including the Moratorium, a formal Inquiry followed by a Small Business Roundtable, and supporting the implementation of the West Hollywood 5 Star Promise represents a thorough process that includes full transparency, an opportunity to confirm improprieties instead of legislating based on innuendo, and to foster collaborative and thoughtful dialogue to generate meaningful solutions. This has been the standard of West Hollywood City Councils of the past, and one that should remain in place to protect residents and businesses alike as we continue to rebuild from the tragedies of the pandemic.

Sincerely,



Genevieve Morrill, President and CEO

Cc: WHCC Board of Directors | WHCC Hotel Council