



April 24, 2020

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 W Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: A Framework for Los Angeles County COVID-19 Economic Resiliency Task Force

LA County Board of Supervisors:

We, the undersigned regional economic development organizations, commend the Los Angeles (LA) County Board of Supervisors for initiating planning both to safely reopen businesses and the broader economy, and to quickly establish uniform prerequisites and protocols across the county for doing so through a public-private partnership with affected industries, the County and its many city governments working together in a shared effort to return LA County to the full employment levels it experienced before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Already, hundreds of thousands of LA County residents have lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 crisis, but this is just the “tip of the iceberg”, as unemployment in the Los Angeles-Anaheim metropolitan statistical area (MSA) has the potential to reach an estimated 31.4 percent, which represents a job loss of over 1.7 million and 1.2 million from a year ago in the MSA and the County, respectively, according to a recent analysis by the LAEDC (https://laedc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/LAEDC-IAE_SoCal-COVID19-Jobs_04.21.20_FINALe.pdf). This level of unemployment has not been experienced in modern times, and it requires the full and urgent attention of the County Board of Supervisors.

Above all, we respectfully urge the County to act quickly to establish clear, seamless and uniform protocols, which don't differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction within the County, that enable businesses to safely re-employ their workers and place LA County's economy and workforce on the road to recovery, reinvention, resilience and resurgence.

In addition, we *strongly support* the notion of forming an LA County Economic Resiliency Task Force (the “Task Force”) with leaders from the business, labor, government and education communities to develop actionable recommendations for the County and its 88 cities to lever government-business partnerships to improve the economy, create jobs and return to full employment. And, we endorse the language in a forthcoming Board motion to create this Task Force, titled: “Los Angeles County Roadmap to Economic Recovery”, which reads: “a comprehensive plan to revive and re-open our economy and return to full employment as we experienced before COVID-19...will only be possible through public-private partnerships with industries and governments working together.” For this reason, we too believe that a supermajority of representatives on the Task Force should be drawn primarily from LA County's most negatively affected

sectors, such as accommodation and food services; retail trade; arts, entertainment and recreation; health care; manufacturing; construction; wholesale trade and logistics; and any number of service-based sectors, most of which support the poorest residents in our community, to establish these protocols and prerequisites for getting county residents back to work safely and as quickly as possible.

Along with providing the LA County Board of Supervisors with recommendations on the progressive steps needed to quickly **reopen** the economy and get residents back to work, we believe that this business-, labor-, government- and education-comprised Task Force should be charged with advising the Board on: how best to accelerate the jobs **recovery**; how best to **reinvent** the LA economy to be more inclusive; how best to ensure more **resilient** economy going forward; and how best to promote LA's economic **resurgence**, leveraging, for example, the lessons learned and trends emerging from the crisis, e.g., re-shoring of manufacturing, supply chain security. Still, we recommend that for the co-purposes of efficiency and of overall effectiveness that this Task Force be comprised of no more than 25 individuals so that it can act in the quick manner this crisis demands; if additional expertise are required, Task Force members can convene with other leaders to gather input.

I. Reopening the LA Economy and Getting County Residents Back to Work

The reopening phase should identify the near-term steps that can be taken, in a phased approach, to safely open businesses that have been closed. We suggest the following guiding recommendations for the Task Force:

1. Establish best practices for health criteria, social distancing and related operational and sanitation protocols and activities that can guide the re-opening of businesses in each sector,¹ allowing for variations in practices between business sectors. These protocols should be consistent with the Governor's orders to eliminate confusion and unnecessary liability that could delay reopening.
2. Establish protocols for progressive re-opening of businesses that adhere to and follow the health and safety best practices, as established. Prioritize this re-opening by:
 - Sectors that can quickly and easily implement health and safety protocols and restore operations (e.g., manufacturing of non-essential goods)
 - Sectors that employ large numbers of individuals that were negatively affected by the Los Angeles Health Officer "Safer at Home Order", as revised and amended, but that can implement protocols safely (e.g., restaurants with outdoor seating, small retail establishments)
 - Sectors that have large multiplier effects, in terms of their indirect and induced job, economic and fiscal impacts, and whose operations stimulate other upstream and downstream economic activity (e.g., film production, R&D-intensive industries, high-value production and manufacturing)
3. Establish estimated timeframes and criteria by which successive waves of reopening will occur and based on successful implementation of health and safety protocols at the first set of establishments
4. Identify near-term rapid reemployment opportunities in industries that are expanding (i.e. logistics) and/or that are needed to respond to the COVID crisis (personal protective equipment (PPE) production, broadband expansion to low-income communities)

¹ These protocols should meet Governor Newsom's framework, covering such topics as testing, social distancing, PPE use, sanitation protocols, etc.

5. Develop and propose criteria for cross-agency collaboration on core near-term infrastructure build-out priorities, such as: regional economic resilience; identifiable job creation benefits; and positive economic and fiscal returns on investment, for example, the expansion of broadband across the County to ensure work-from-home and study-from-home options are not determined by the community in which you live, but are provided to *all* County residents

II. Accelerating the Jobs Recovery

The jobs recovery phase should add ongoing measures that increase consumer confidence and expand inclusive growth across the County, while ensuring that new health risks do not jeopardize reopening steps that have occurred. We suggest the following guiding recommendations for the Task Force:

1. Establish criteria that businesses can follow on when to report testing results so that “hotspots” of sporadic coronavirus outbreaks can be quickly identified, triaged, and remedied
2. Establish rules for tracking and tracing any potential outbreaks that are identified through testing at local businesses
3. Establish the procedures for conducting and procuring an agency-wide inventory of health care and PPE-related assets
4. Address additional considerations to restore broader public confidence to go out, shop, dine and conduct commerce at LA County establishment (e.g., a voluntary “coronavirus-clean” health rating / certification process or system for use by businesses that want to provide assurances to employees, patrons, guests and visitors)

III. Engendering Economic Reinvention, Resilience and Resurgence

Post-crisis, LA County must begin to rethink and reinvent its economy to be more inclusive and resilient. Task Force vision-setting and the design of a plan with programs should be geared towards LA County’s post-recovery socioeconomic resurgence and renaissance, leveraging, for example, the lessons learned and trends emerging from the crisis, e.g., re-shoring of manufacturing, supply chain security, which can be exploited to accelerate this post-recovery reinvention, resilience and resurgence. We suggest the following guiding recommendations for the Task Force:

1. Devise an incentive program for commercial-stage biopharmaceutical and medical device companies to locate in Los Angeles County to reduce the future risk of disruptions to the supply chain for LA County
2. Establish purchasing protocols that give preferential contracts to US-owned, LA County-based biotechnology and medical device companies as the county replenishes its strategic reserves
3. Devise an incentive program for LA County hospitals to procure from local vendors, especially minority-owned suppliers and manufacturers
4. Design a manufacturing business retention, attraction, expansion and revitalization program that takes advantage of the national “localization” trend to re-shore manufacturing jobs and businesses, especially those critical for safety, health and/or national security (e.g., biotech, medical devices/supplies, aerospace/defense, etc.), with the goal to make LA County the nation’s production and manufacturing jobs hub in this critical (LA-concentrated) industries
5. Design supply chain security protocols that protect the movement and throughput of goods through LA County ports (air and sea) and on the county’s multi-modal systems and conveyances in a secure, affordable and efficient way, positioning the LA region as the nation’s “go to” and secure mover of choice for goods, especially high-value and health critical ones, such as therapeutics

In conclusion, we applaud the Board of Supervisors for its timely response to the economic crisis befalling our county's residents and businesses, especially our small and micro businesses, and we ask you to continue this work with a the same sense of urgency, as many residents and small businesses are hanging on by a thread. Thank for you considering the above recommendations, and we look forward to working with you as part of the public-partnership that will be needed to help LA County's economy to reopen, recover, reinvent itself, be more resilient and eventually resurge.

Sincerely,



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Holly Schroeder
President & CEO
Santa Clarita Valley Economic Development Corporation



Bill R. Manis
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