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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

**SAN FRANCISCO ANNOUNCES MEASURES TO SUPPORT
SMALL BUSINESSES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

Deferral of business taxes and licensing fees, launch of economic relief fund, and other support efforts aim to help struggling small businesses and workers

San Francisco, CA — Mayor London N. Breed today announced measures to support small businesses in San Francisco that are experiencing a slowdown in business as a result of COVID-19, the disease caused by novel coronavirus. She was joined by Senator Scott Wiener, Treasurer José Cisneros, City Controller Ben Rosenfield, Assessor-Recorder Carmen Chu, Board President Norman Yee, Supervisor Aaron Peskin, and the Office of Economic and Workforce Development for the announcement at a small business in Chinatown.

These efforts include deferring business taxes and licensing fees, launching a relief fund for impacted businesses, supporting nonprofits funded by the City so workers don't lose their incomes, and working with partners in the philanthropic and private sector, as well as advocating for state and federal support for workers and businesses. The City will also be launching a website that will serve as a one-stop shop for all resources, contacts, and updates for small businesses: www.oewd.org/covid19

“It's important that people follow the public health recommendations to disrupt the spread of COVID-19 in our communities,” said Mayor Breed. “We know these recommendations are disruptive to the lives of everyone in our City, but they will help slow the spread of this disease. Unfortunately, that means that many of our small businesses are feeling the economic impact of people staying home and not shopping or going out to eat. That's why we are working to provide relief and support for our small businesses and the workers who rely on them for their livelihood. These are just the first steps of what we are doing for our small business community.”

The measures Mayor Breed announced today are the following:

Defer Business Taxes for Small Businesses

In order to provide immediate cash-flow assistance to small businesses, Mayor Breed will be working with Treasurer Cisneros to notify small businesses that the next round of quarterly businesses taxes can be deferred. Businesses are required to pre-pay their first quarter business taxes for current tax year by April 30th. This announcement will allow businesses to not pre-pay, deferring payment due to February 2021. No interest payments, fees, or fines will accrue as a result of the deferral. This benefit will be offered to business with up to \$10 million in gross receipts, benefiting approximately 8,050 businesses with an average \$5,400 tax payment deferral each.



Defer Business Licensing Fees

The City will provide further tax relief by delaying the City's collection of the unified license bill, which includes but is not limited to charges to restaurants and food businesses, bars, convenience stores, many small retailers, hotels, and tour operators, from departments such as the Department of Public Health, Entertainment Commission, Fire Department, and Police Department. The initial delay will be for three months, with a further delay to be contemplated based on need. This will lead to \$14 million in deferrals impacting 11,000 payees.

Provide Immediate Relief

The City will establish a fund to provide immediate relief for impacted small businesses with an initial investment of \$1 million to provide up to 100 businesses with grants of \$10,000 each in immediate relief. This fund will be administered by the Office of Economic and Workforce Development to businesses that show a loss of revenue and can be increased as need arises.

Guarantee Continuance of City-Funded Nonprofit Contracts

The Controller has issued [guidance](#) to our nonprofit partners that the City will continue to pay pursuant to contracts even if the nonprofit organization's operations are affected. This will ensure nonprofit workers will not lose income due to illness or if a nonprofit is shut down or experiences service disruptions as part of the novel coronavirus response.

Seek State and Federal Support for Businesses and Workers

Mayor Breed will work with local partners to advocate for regulatory relief from both state and federal government around employment benefits, including unemployment, sick leave, disability, and other matters.

Secure Private Sector and Philanthropic Support for Small Businesses

The City will work with private sector financial partners and philanthropy to identify resources, provide credit and lending flexibility, and offer direct financial support to the maximum extent feasible.

Support for Employees and Contractors

The City is requesting that all private sector employers in San Francisco be as flexible as possible with their employees and with their small business contractors. The City will lead by example by reaching out to commercial tenants to discuss any need for rent payment deferral, including tenants at the Port, the Airport, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, and others.

Create Website to Provide Information for Small Businesses

The City has created a one-stop resource for employers and employees outlining all existing resources, contacts for assistance, and to provide updates on the City's growing response to the business community. Website: www.oewd.org/covid19

"Our response to COVID-19, while essential as a matter of public health, is creating severe economic consequences for many workers—especially services workers—and businesses," said



Senator Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco). “We must support our workers and businesses as they move through this difficult time. Many workers are losing income—or being laid off entirely—and many small businesses are at risk of closure. We need to ensure people are aware of all available state safety net resources, and we need financial supports for struggling businesses. As we combat this epidemic, we must make clear that we’re in this together and that we’ll support everyone who needs it.”

“I am proud to bring the resources of the Treasurer’s Office to bear in this critical citywide effort,” said Treasurer José Cisneros. “Our track record of strong customer service and responsiveness will help deliver the Mayor’s efforts to alleviate burdens on businesses impacted by COVID-19.”

“It’s too soon to speculate about the long-term economic impacts but we won’t downplay the immediate severity of the situation,” City Controller Ben Rosenfield. “Right now, San Francisco hotels and many small businesses are bearing the brunt of the knock-on effects from limited travel and necessary social distancing recommendations, and we should expect further fallout in other sectors. In the coming week, my office will release revised projections of current year fiscal revenues impacts.”

“At times like these, we are reminded of how interconnected we are to one another,” said Assessor-Recorder Carmen Chu. “Our small businesses and all the people they employ are hurting right now. These are our neighbors, our friends. That is why it is so important for us to come together as one City to do right by our communities by bringing forward an immediate local tax relief program.”

“We are working together as a City to ensure that those of us who are hardest hit by the economic impacts of the coronavirus, are supported,” said Board President Norman Yee. “These actions are only the first ones - we are working quickly on comprehensive solutions so that no one is left behind. We will get through this.”

“Even before coronavirus, the City has been working to help small businesses, which we all know have faced tremendous challenges,” said Supervisor Aaron Peskin. “Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures, and we have to protect the public health and the backbone of our economy. Every elected official is coming together to support the first steps toward ensuring small businesses, their employees and families remain as stable as possible in this challenging time.”

“During this time of uncertainty, our small businesses are especially vulnerable and require immediate support to mitigate economic impacts,” said Joaquín Torres, Director of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development. “Our actions today represent our first steps to quickly address cash flow challenges as our small business community plans for the future. Our office and our partners are here to provide relief and guidance on how we as a city may support both employees and employers during this difficult time.”



“We deeply appreciate Mayor London Breed for taking fast, decisive action to protect our economy, small businesses, and working-class people during this critical time,” said Rodney Fong, President and CEO of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce. “The directives she is putting in place today will bring immediate cash flow relief to small businesses, keeping them afloat and allowing them to provide their employees adequate hours. We are working day and night with our partners in government and the community to collectively support our small businesses and workers.”

“This is a difficult time for everyone. I am glad to see the Mayor and City are taking swift actions to address the challenges Chinatown small businesses are facing because of the impacts by the novel coronavirus,” said Kitman Chan, First Vice President, Chinese Chamber of Commerce. “We want everyone to know that Chinatown is open for business and we are ready show the world what we have to offer.”

Earlier today, the Health Officer for the City and County of San Francisco issued a Public Health Order prohibiting all non-essential large events of 1,000 or more persons. This Order builds on the City’s public health recommendations that encourage social distancing and other behaviors to slow the spread of novel coronavirus.

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