

WHEREAS, the Leisure & Hospitality industry employed 200,000 San Diegans before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, over half of whom are currently unemployed; and

WHEREAS, unemployment benefits to these workers are expiring and the state's unemployment system has been faulty, with many people unable to receive their checks; and

WHEREAS, the lodging industry represents \$12 billion of San Diego's annual economic output; and

WHEREAS, tourism occupancy tax (TOT) collected by the City has declined from nearly \$250 million in fiscal year 2019 to a forecasted less than \$100 million in the current fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, the lodging industry relies on business meetings as a key source of revenue after the summer leisure season has concluded; and

WHEREAS, the state of California is currently the only state in the union that does not allow business meetings in hotels; and

WHEREAS, if group business meetings are not allowed to restart, San Diego will lose that important business to other states that do allow these group meetings, further hampering the recovery of the local tourism economy; and

WHEREAS, the hotel and lodging industry has put forward a responsible plan for re-opening hotels for business meetings that includes extensive cleaning protocols, ample personal protective equipment (PPE) for employees, facial coverings indoors, increased frequent sanitation of high touch areas, pre-registration and health screenings for meeting attendees, hand sanitizing stations throughout, reduced capacity in meeting rooms with attendees spaced six feet apart in assigned seating, and food options served in individually wrapped packages; and

WHEREAS, this business meeting re-opening plan has been reviewed by the San Diego County Public Health Department led by Dr. Wilma Wooten who has said the County would recommend the plan to the State of California as it develops guidelines to facilitate these activities; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of both hotel workers and employers, as well as restaurants and other associated businesses, for the state to approve the hotel re-opening protocols for business meetings;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of San Diego that Governor Newsom should expeditiously approve the re-opening plan for hotel business meetings or at minimum provide his feedback on what additional protocols he would need to see to approve this plan.