

California State Senate

STANDING COMMITTEES

EDUCATION

ENERGY, UTILITIES
& COMMUNICATIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

HEALTH

TRANSPORTATION

JOINT COMMITTEES

LEGISLATIVE AUDIT

RULES

SELECT COMMITTEES

PORTS AND GOODS MOVEMENT
CHAIR



SENATOR LENA A. GONZALEZ

THIRTY-THIRD SENATE DISTRICT

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

January 7, 2025

Mayor and Councilmembers
411 W. Ocean Boulevard
Long Beach, CA 90802

RE: Item 27 - Support for Modernizing Wage Rates for Airport and Convention Center Workers

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

As Majority Leader of the California State Senate representing District 33, I urge your support for stronger living wages for concession workers at the Long Beach Airport and Long Beach Convention Center. Specifically, I am advocating increasing their wage to \$23/hour, with an escalator to reach \$29.50/hour by the 2028 Olympics.

In March 2024, Long Beach voters supported living wages for hospitality workers through the passage of Measure RW. This vote reflects the community's values and priorities. With the current wage scale, airport and convention center workers must pay over 80% of their income to rent in Long Beach; while, both the airport and convention center have well surpassed their pre-pandemic levels. The \$250,000 estimated cost of wage increases is 0.5% of the City's \$50 million investment in the convention center.

Improving the quality of life for Long Beach workers is a win for everyone. Investment in local worker wages leads to increased spending in our community. The Berkley Economic Advising and Research (BEAR) analysis for Los Angeles revealed that raising wages created 6,000 full-time equivalent jobs through increased consumer spending. Additionally, data from the Long Beach Annual Comprehensive Financial Report shows steady growth in the City's Transient Occupancy Tax following hotel wage increases in 2012 and 2014.

I respectfully recommend the following amendments for an effective implementation:

- **Immediate Enforcement:** In the past, cities have been able to utilize their police power to enact immediate wage increases in order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public. I urge the City to explore utilizing its legal authority to enact immediate wage increases.

- **Comprehensive Coverage:** The City should ensure the ordinance covers all workers, including temporary workers. Excluding temporary workers would incentivize concessionaires to bypass direct hires in favor of temporary workers, who would perform the same work at lower wages. This would undermine the spirit of the ordinance to improve the welfare of workers.

I urge the Long Beach City Council to align with Long Beach voters and support living wages for tourism workers. If you have any questions or require further information, please feel free to contact my office at (562) 256-7921.

Sincerely,



Lena Gonzalez
Senator, District 33