



EAST BAY ALLIANCE FOR A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY
Building Power With Community, Workers & People of Faith

May 17, 2019

Ally Medina
City of Emeryville, Mayor
1333 Park Ave
Emeryville, CA 94608

Re: Carve outs to Emeryville's Minimum Wage Policy – OPPOSED

Dear Mayor Medina,

Emeryville has been a leader in the Bay Area and nationally in improving the quality of low wage jobs, garnering national media attention on CNN and in the New York Times for raising wages and ensuring reliable schedules. Like you, we know that having a healthy workforce that is paid enough to make ends meet with regular schedules to plan their lives is good for workers, good for families, and good for the Emeryville community.

The carve out amendment to the minimum wage policy on the City Council's May 21 agenda is underinformed, mis-guided policy. The report presented on May 7, 2019 was from data gathered nearly a year ago and provides a limited and skewed perspective from businesses that self-selected to complete the survey and offer their opinions. The study did not look at publicly gathered data sets like California Economic Development Department, which can show actual job and wage growth data. The study did not ask businesses to provide specific data from their own experience to back up the opinions they are providing. Finally, the study did not include any data of the workers' perspective on how increased wages has improved their quality of life and how, even at \$15/hour, many workers are likely still struggling to pay the rent and provide for their families.

The process to propose this amendment is being rushed with little opportunity for debate or input from the partners who developed the policy in 2015. EBASE worked closely with city councilmembers and staff to create a policy that met the needs of Emeryville workers and businesses. This rushed amendment process has not provided an opportunity for EBASE, our allies, or Emeryville workers to join in the debate.

Finally opening up the policy for carve outs now will open the flood gates to other corporations demanding carve outs as well. Emeryville raised wages along with many other Bay Area cities – including Oakland, Berkeley, San Leandro, El Cerrito. Allowing for carve outs signals that minimum wages are on the table and that policies can be changed to allow workers' wages to stagnate or be cut. Not only is this problematic for Emeryville's low wage workers, but sets a horrible precedent that creates openings for other cities to roll back their minimum wage and worker standards policies.



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Since Emeryville passed its minimum wage policy in 2015, the cost of living in the Bay Area has only gotten more expensive and the economic divide between the top and the bottom has gotten wider. Economic inequity hits hardest for communities of color who make up the majority of low wage workers; this inequity also threatens the long-term economic future of our region¹.

The proposed carve out would leave workers at these restaurants with stagnant wages and unable to make ends meet. Steadily raising wages among restaurant and retail workers is critical to increasing racial equity, giving these workers a shot at affording housing and maintaining a stable life. We urge you to oppose this amendment and maintain the wage raise for all Emeryville workers.

Sincerely,

Kate O'Hara
Executive Director

Co-Signed by:

Bay Area Black Worker Center
Centro Legal de la Raza
SEIU Local 1021
Street Level Health Project

CC:

Councilmember Dianne Martinez
Councilmember John Bauters
Councilmember Scott Donahue
Councilmember Christian Patz
Christine Daniel, City Manager

¹ "An Equity Profile of the San Francisco Bay Area Region." PolicyLink, USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity, and The San Francisco Foundation. April 2015.