

CALIFORNIA INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE COUNCIL

*Advancing public policy to improve the health and safety
of workers and the community.*

Senator Richard Pan, Chair
California Senate Committee on Health
State Capitol, Room 2191
Sacramento, CA 95814

June 17, 2021

RE: REQUEST FOR AMENDMENT TO AB 240 (RODRIGUEZ) PUBLIC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

Dear Senator Pan and Senate Committee on Health,

On behalf of the California Industrial Hygiene Council (CIHC) we would like to request an amendment to AB 240 related to requirements for the State Department of Public Health to contract with a qualified entity to conduct an evaluation of the adequacy of local health department infrastructure and to make recommendations regarding future staffing, workforce needs, and resources such that accurate funding may be obtained. We are in a position to support the bill if it is amended as recommended.

As currently written, AB 240 requires that:

“(a) The State Department of Public Health shall contract with an appropriate and qualified entity to conduct an evaluation of the adequacy of the local health department infrastructure, and to make recommendations for future staffing, workforce needs, and resources, in order to accurately and adequately fund local public health. This evaluation shall, at a minimum, accomplish all of the following:

(1) Evaluate the public health workforce, including identification of barriers and recommendations for adequate staffing of local health departments, appropriate credentialing, access to training and workforce development, recruitment and retention supports, and incentivizing a pipeline of professionals to work in public health.”

CIHC would like to offer our support and provide some feedback for consideration regarding the composition of the “qualified entity” selected to perform the evaluation.

Certified Industrial Hygienists (CIHs) are recognized and title protected in the Business and Professions Code as “a person who has met the education, experience, and examination requirements of an industrial hygiene certification organization.” Industrial hygiene is “the science and art devoted to the anticipation, recognition, evaluation and control of environmental factors or stress which may cause sickness, impaired health and well-being, or significant discomfort and inefficiency among workers or among the citizens of a community.” (Business and Professions Code 20700). Due to their education, training, and experience related to risk assessment of exposure to chemical, biological, and physical hazards, CIHs provide unique and valuable insight on public health matters involving these hazards. Therefore, CIHC suggests that the “qualified entity” selected to perform the evaluation include a CIH.

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AB 240 also requires that:

“(c) The department shall provide oversight of the entity selected for the evaluation and shall convene an advisory group that shall include representatives of the Emergency Medical Services Authority, County Health Executives Association of California, California Conference of Local Health Officers, public health laboratory directors, public health nurses, communicable disease controllers, tribes, the exclusive representatives of public health workers, local emergency medical services administrators, schools of public health, and organizations aimed at addressing health disparities in California.”

CIHC recommends that a CIH be included as a representative member of the “advisory group” selected to provide oversight of the “qualified entity”.

AB 240 specifies that the California Future Health Workforce Commission’s February 2019 report identified the following priority professions in the field of prevention and public health:

“(1) State and local health department staff, including, but not limited to, epidemiologists, public health nutritionists, infectious disease experts, and disaster preparedness specialists.

(2) Public health nurses.

(3) Data analysts.

(4) Health administrators.

(5) Community health workers and promoters.

(6) Community health educators.”

CIHC recommends that “Certified Industrial Hygienists (CIHs)” also be listed as a priority profession related to public health prevention for consideration and inclusion in critical public health infrastructure.

We would be pleased to participate in any discussions related to the inclusion of CIHs as members of the “qualified entity” performing public health infrastructure evaluation, members of the “advisory group” providing oversight related to the evaluation, and as a priority profession in public health prevention. We are in a position to support the bill if it is amended as recommended.

The CIHC, founded in 1990, represents the occupational and environmental health profession in California and is affiliated with the national American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), an 8,000-member organization. The CIHC is formally comprised of occupational and environmental health and safety professionals who are members of the five California AIHA local sections represented by the CIHC Board of Directors. The CIHC’s mission is to provide sound scientific and technological input to the regulatory and legislative process, and establish a legislative presence in the state Capitol through professional representation.

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Thank you for your consideration. Please let us know if there are any questions concerning the above-stated points. On behalf of CIHC, I may be reached by telephone at (530) 622-7196 or email at kwa-sacramento@att.net.

Best Regards,
CALIFORNIA INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE COUNCIL

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Pamela Murcell", written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Pamela Murcell, MS, CIH
President, CIHC