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December 11, 2020

Eduardo Enz
Executive Director, Commission on Health and Safety and Workers Compensation
California Department of Industrial Relations
1515 Clay St., 17th Floor
Oakland CA 94612

RE: Request for Study on the Role of Janitors in the Safe Re-Opening of California

Dear Mr. Enz:

I am requesting the Commission on Health and Safety Workers Compensation (CHSWC) partner with a team of UC Departments mentioned herein to carry out their proposed study on the healthy and safe disinfection procedures for janitorial workers so that we may conduct a safe re-opening of the California economy in 2021.

California's public health guidelines recommend all high touch surfaces be disinfected at least daily and those with high traffic be disinfected more often. A common interest exists between government, building owners/contractors, and labor to ensure that buildings will be safe to repopulate both for those who use the buildings and those who clean and disinfect them post COVID-19. Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces will require adequate staffing. However, inappropriate productivity requirements will inevitably lead to inadequate disinfection and greater occupational health risks for the janitors charged with this work.

According to the CHSWC's 2017 study, *Excessive Workload in the Janitorial Industry*, janitors are already stretched thin because they are required to clean tens of thousands of square feet nightly. In fact, janitors from the Los Angeles Unified School District reported that they thoroughly disinfect school bathrooms only three times a year. Service Employees International Union, United Service Workers West's Research Department also reported that for most of the thousands of commercial office buildings their 25,000 janitorial members clean, a janitor can only empty the trash and dust most areas on alternating nights, spot-vacuum just twice a week and disinfect the bathrooms as infrequently as twice a month.

It is important that we protect the health and safety of our janitors by closely examining their role in safe cleaning and disinfection during COVID-19. This can be accomplished by partnering with a research project that is being led by the following UC Departments: the UC San Francisco Department of Medicine's Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, the UC Ergonomics Research and Graduate Training Program, the UC Berkeley School of Public Health's Division of Environmental Health Sciences and the UC Berkeley School of Public Health's Labor and Occupational Health Program. Their proposed study will include a statewide survey, focus groups and a detailed time and motion study and ergonomic analysis to assess the risk of musculoskeletal disorders amongst janitors assigned to complete COVID-19 disinfection and cleaning according to the Center for Disease Control, California Occupational Safety and Health Administration and California Department of Public Health guidelines across a range of critical venues, including office buildings, airports and high tech facilities.

As we move to reopen our state, it is vital that we have clear direction on how to thoroughly clean and safely disinfect buildings. This must include clear science-based standards to ensure properties are cleaned and properly disinfected at regular intervals. For this reason, I respectfully request the CHSWC engage the aforementioned UC Departments to carry out their proposed study.

Thank you. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact my office at (916) 319-2053.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Miguel Santiago". The signature is written in a cursive style with a vertical line to the right of the name.

MIGUEL SANTIAGO

Assembly Member, 53rd District

CC: Deanna Ping, Chief Deputy Director, California Department of Industrial Relations