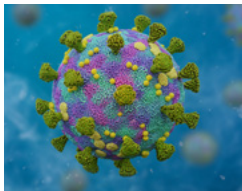


ALERT

Allies Join CalChamber Call for COVID Business Relief

Action Needed to Prevent California Employer Exodus



The California Chamber of Commerce and nearly 200 allied business organizations representing all sectors of the

economy and employing millions of California workers sent a letter this week to Governor Gavin Newsom and the Legislature calling for specific and immediate actions to curb the impact of the current pandemic-related economic crisis as well as address the underlying causes of an ongoing exodus of employers to other states.

“The State will need a strong business recovery to bring back jobs and stability to our communities. We cannot recover when businesses are shutting down and employ-

ers are leaving,” the coalition states.

In the [letter](#), the signatories state that many employers currently believe they could safely reopen given the extensive work they have done to create a safe environment for their employees and customers. The letter further describes how the pandemic has exacerbated the challenge of doing business in an already high-cost state and, as a result, some employers are shutting down their office/locations here completely, transferring well-paying jobs elsewhere.

While the coalition praises the Governor for his proposed grants, loans and tax relief for businesses, they believe much more must be done now to alleviate pressure on business and local economies.

See Allies Join CalChamber: Page 6

Finance Director Budget Review

State Expects to Receive Surplus Revenue, But Sees Deficits on the Horizon



California Finance Director Keely Martin Bosler previews the Governor’s 2021–2022 state budget during a CalChamber webinar on January 12.

Despite enjoying a record \$34 billion budget surplus and prudent reserves from burgeoning but one-time tax revenues, California budget officials expect to see fiscal deficits in the next three years, state Finance Director Keely Martin Bosler told business leaders during a California Chamber of Commerce webinar on January 12.

These projections mean that it is critical to maintain funding reserves if the state wishes to preserve existing programs, and it means that the Legislature should not create new funding obligations, she explained.

See State Expects: Page 3

Governor’s Budget Proposes Economic Relief, No New Taxes



Nobody would have been surprised if Governor Gavin Newsom had presented his new state budget wearing a neck brace. The whiplash from budget boom to bust to recovery must have been intense.

One year ago while the country, and especially California, were flying high economically, the Governor presented a \$222 billion budget with an \$18 billion surplus. Three months later, the pandemic-fueled recession caused unemployment in California to quadruple, and retail sales cratered. The Governor and Legislature predicted a \$54 billion budget deficit and raised taxes, cut spending and borrowed from the future to cover the fiscal hole.

But the Pandemic Recession has been unlike any other economic downturn experienced in the modern era. The economic pain has been real, but it has hit hardest workers in hospitality, tourism and other public-facing businesses. Low-wage and often low-skilled workers in these industries, along with small business owners statewide, have been devastated. The social and community devastation has ravaged these communities, and continues to this day. But not the state budget.

See Governor’s Budget: Page 4

Inside

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Labor Law Corner

Report COVID-19 Positive Test Result to Workers' Comp Carrier



Sunny Lee
HR Adviser

Do I have to have to file a workers' compensation claim every time one of my employees tests positive for COVID-19?

No. The new law in California that went into effect September 19, 2020 requires an employer to report a positive COVID-19 test to their workers' compensation carrier within three business days from when the employer knows or reasonably should have known that an employee has tested positive.

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All the employer is required to do is to report a positive test result and the carrier will determine whether an "outbreak" has occurred, thereby triggering the presumption of a workplace injury.

Reporting Requirements

Employers must provide written notification to their claims administrator in writing via electronic mail or facsimile within three business days and include the following information:

- An employee has tested positive.
- The date that the employee tested positive, which is the date the specimen was collected for testing.
- The specific address or addresses of the employee's specific place of employment during the 14-day period preceding the date of the employee's positive test.
- The highest number of employees who reported to work at the employee's specific place of employment in the 45-day period preceding the last day the employee worked at each specific place of employment.

Civil Penalties for Non-Compliance

Under the new law, employers who fail to submit the required information or intentionally submit false or misleading information are subject to a civil penalty of up to \$10,000, assessed by the Labor Commissioner.

Presumption

Although the new law contains a presumption that an employee who tests positive contracted the virus at work, the burden to overcome the presumption is on the employer.

For example, the employer may dispute the presumption by presenting evidence of preventative measures taken

by the employer to reduce transmission. The employer may also present evidence of the employee's non-occupational risks of COVID-19 infection.

Good news for employers with remote workers—the presumption of COVID-19 workplace injury is not applicable to employees who don't leave their place of residence to work unless the employee provides specific in-home health care services.

Close Contact

The definition of "close contact" is 15 minutes of cumulative time within 24 hours.

An employer should investigate as soon as they become aware of a positive test result to determine where the employee may have been exposed, who they have been in close contact with, and whether other employees were exposed or tested positive.

In addition, if an employee tests positive, the employer is obligated to provide written notice within one business day to other employees who were in close contact with that employee.

Since these laws are already in effect, employers may want to contact their workers' compensation carrier to understand what their carrier requires so that they will be prepared with the information that their carrier needs to determine whether a positive test is going to be filed as a workers' compensation claim.

Column based on questions asked by callers on the Labor Law Helpline, a service to California Chamber of Commerce preferred and executive members. For expert explanations of labor laws and Cal/OSHA regulations, not legal counsel for specific situations, call (800) 348-2262 or submit your question at www.hrcalifornia.com.

CalChamber-Sponsored Seminars/Trade Shows

More at www.calchamber.com/events.

Labor and Employment

2021 Employment Law Updates Virtual Seminar. CalChamber. January 21.

Online. (800) 331-8877.

2021 Employment Law Updates Webinar. CalChamber. January 28, Online. (800) 331-8877.

Leaves of Absence: Making Sense of

It All Virtual Seminar. CalChamber. February 18–19, March 18–19, April

See *CalChamber-Sponsored: Page 6*

Next Alert: January 29

State Expects to Receive Surplus Revenue, But Sees Deficits on Horizon

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“We can’t afford additional ongoing spending at all,” Bosler cautioned.

In fact, California’s strong financial foundation during this pandemic comes from years of building up reserves and paying down debts, she said.

While the state saw more revenue than was expected and drops in the state’s gross domestic product (GDP) have largely recovered, 4 million Californians remain jobless and the COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing, she pointed out.

Governor Gavin Newsom’s priority, Bosler said, is to respond to the pandemic and create the conditions necessary to accelerate economic and job recovery.

Early Budget Action

The next budget update will come in May, but Bosler identified a number of items that the Governor would like the Legislature to take immediate action on in the next couple of weeks:

- **Safely Reopen Schools**— Allocate \$2 billion to prioritize in-person instruction;
- **Golden State Stimulus**— Allocate \$2.4 billion to issue \$600 refunds to unemployed Californians;
- **Small Business Grants**— Allocate \$575 million in funding to offer grants to small businesses impacted by COVID-19;
- **Fee Waivers**— Allocate \$70 million to grant license fee waivers to restaurants, bars and hair salons impacted by COVID-19-related closures; and
- Allocate \$2.6 billion in federal relief



Click the image above to view Finance Director Keely Martin Bosler’s webinar presentation.

funds and extend the eviction moratorium for renters.

Budget Summary

During the webinar, Bosler also gave a preview of the Governor’s proposed budget for the 2021–2022 fiscal year. Below are highlights of her presentation; to view Bosler’s presentation in its entirety, see the video on YouTube.

- **Job creation:** The Governor’s budget proposes a number of investments in programs to help train workers in areas of need and help create new jobs, including \$353 million in apprenticeship programs and programs that link higher education institutions with employers. The budget also allocates \$430 million to the CalCompetes program; and proposes tax credits and loans to small and minority-owned businesses.
- **Agriculture and infrastructure:** To help create infrastructure and construction jobs, the budget proposes \$800 million in infill infrastructure grants and deferred maintenance funding to help local governments pay for community infrastructure projects. The budget also

grants \$385 million to address agricultural needs, such as groundwater management, water efficiency programs and integrated pest management.

- **Education:** In addition to adding \$3 billion to the School Rainy Day Fund deposit, the budget also allocates a record \$85.8 billion to Proposition 98 funding, and adds \$2 billion in a cost-of-living adjustment to educators.

In addition to \$7 billion in new federal funding, the budget proposal seeks \$2 billion to help schools reopen safely and \$4.6 billion to address the pandemic’s impact on student learning, including summer school and extended school year.

- **Wildfires:** California saw a devastating wildfire season last year. In response, the budget proposes \$1 billion in wildfire and forest resiliency projects to reduce fire risks. Fire departments, the California Conservation Corps, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) will be asked to perform more fire health projects in the wildfire off season, such as thinning brush and forests, and setting prescribed fires. Waste produced from these forest health measures will be offered for commercial use via the Climate Catalyst Revolving Loan Fund.

Lastly, \$331 million is proposed to help clean up contaminated properties in impacted communities using health-based criteria.

The Governor’s budget summary is available at <http://ebudget.ca.gov/FullBudgetSummary.pdf>.

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Governor's Budget Proposes Economic Relief, No New Taxes

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Much of the California economy has been spared because it was able to accommodate to the pandemic's cruel dichotomy: if your business or job is not dependent on bringing people together, you were likely to remain in business or employed. Millions of Californians changed their place of work to their kitchen table, or continued on the job masked, separated and vigilant.

The California investment economy thrived. A buoyant stock market and surprisingly strong real estate market created capital gains revenues double the amount forecast in 2020.

As a consequence, rather than managing a \$54 billion deficit, the Governor is proposing a \$227 billion balanced budget with no new tax increases and \$34 billion in reserves and surpluses, which provides record levels of public school funds, increases spending on higher education without any tuition increases, and expands the social safety net.

Indeed, the uncredited engine of the budget recovery are California's employers and taxpayers, who emptied their pockets of more than \$70 billion in taxes (over three years) above what state policy makers anticipated just six months ago.

Governor's Proposals

Top of the Governor's to-do list is addressing the pandemic and its economic consequences.

He will ask the Legislature to urgently approve this month spending authority to provide immediate relief for struggling individuals, businesses and students, including:

- A \$600 stimulus payment to two million low-income workers (\$2.4 billion).
- Another \$575 million in grants to small businesses and nonprofits, on top of an earlier-approved \$500 million small business grant program.
- Relief from state fees for businesses affected by shutdowns, such as restaurants and public-facing services (\$70 million).

- Safe reopening of elementary schools, beginning in February (\$2 billion).

Earlier, the Governor announced his intention to provide additional support and incentives for business retention and relief to accelerate economic recovery and job creation, including:

- Adding \$180 million over two years to the California Competes economic development tax credit, plus another one-time \$250 million for special economic development grants under this program.
- Extending Main Street Small Business Tax Credit (\$100 million).
- Mitigating the state and local tax (SALT) deduction limitation for S-corporation shareholders.
- The California Dream Fund to seed entrepreneurship and small business creation in underserved communities (\$35 million).
- Additional funds to provide small business and disaster loan guarantees (\$50 million to be leveraged to provide \$250 million in loans), the Small Business Finance Center of the Infrastructure Bank (\$50 million) and for the California Rebuilding Fund (\$12.5 million).
- Expanded sales tax exclusions to promote innovation and meet the state's climate goals (\$100 million).

CalChamber President and CEO Allan Zaremberg welcomed the Governor's announcement on help for small businesses. "CalChamber looks forward to working with the Governor, the administration and the Legislature to get much-needed relief to California's beleaguered small businesses, as soon as possible," he said.

The application for the California Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant can be found at <https://careliefgrant.com/>.

The budget proposal also includes money to improve vaccine distribution, and expand testing and tracing, among other activities.

The Governor proposes record spending for public schools, more than \$89 billion, which includes \$4.6 billion for summer school and extra learning time, \$500 million for teacher career development and \$700 million to support student mental health.

California's four-year colleges and universities also received increases in the proposed budget, totaling nearly \$800 million. The Governor anticipates no tuition increases at the University of California or California State University this year.

The Governor's emphasis on housing policy this year will focus primarily on continuing his initiatives on homelessness and continuing to support below-market rate housing. The budget proposes an additional \$500 million for low-income housing tax credits to support low-income housing development. The budget also proposes \$500 million for "infill infrastructure," which are subsidies for site remediation or other infrastructure to enable housing construction in urban areas.

Further fleshing out his commitment to ban the sale of internal combustion automobiles in the state by 2035, the Governor proposed \$1.5 billion to achieve the state's zero-emission vehicle goals, including securitizing up to \$1 billion to accelerate the pace and scale of the infrastructure needed to support zero-emission vehicles. These funds will be generated from future cap-and-trade revenues.

The budget also includes \$1 billion for forest management and fire prevention strategies, to further address California's notorious vulnerability to catastrophic wildfires. Elements of this plan will include better forest management to improve forest health, more fire breaks and home hardening, and increasing the number of fire suppression crews and aircraft.

Contact: Loren Kaye

A New Year, A New Deal: The UK's Future Relationship with California



Following are observations on future United Kingdom-California relations by

Joe White, Tech Envoy to the United States and British Consul General San Francisco; and Emily Cloke, British Consul General Los Angeles.

On December 24, 2020, the United Kingdom and European Union reached an agreement beginning a new chapter in our relationship centered on free trade and friendly cooperation as sovereign equals. We understand that our friends in California will still want to conduct significant cross-border business between the U.K. and the EU. Our aim is to support you to do just that, and to maintain the U.K.'s status as the location of choice for Californian companies expanding overseas.

Under the U.K.-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, businesses will continue to be able to trade goods and services smoothly under the most liberal market access arrangements either party has ever offered: it grants zero tariffs and zero quotas for goods, alongside arrangements on financial services equivalence and data adequacy. It does this while maintaining high labor, environment and climate standards.

Additionally, there will be no hard border on the island of Ireland, upholding the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement alongside the constitutional integrity of the U.K. All of this allows the U.K. to strike deals and regulate in a way that suits our economy and businesses—doing things more innovatively and effectively.

Bilateral Agreements

The U.K. is taking full advantage of our newfound freedom and autonomy to show what Global Britain means to the world. We have been working tirelessly to secure bilateral trade agreements, striking deals with 61 countries from Canada to Japan to South Africa, covering trade worth \$269.9 billion in 2019. For 2021 we will go further, taking international leadership in co-hosting the COP26 conference in Glasgow to galvanize global efforts to tackle climate change. We will also use our G7 Presidency to drive a global recovery from COVID-19, while working together to strengthen democratic governance and established international frameworks.



Joe White, Tech Envoy to the U.S. and British Consul General San Francisco



Emily Cloke, British Consul General Los Angeles

In the United States, we are renewing our long and valued partnership to tackle new challenges, advancing our shared priorities from climate change to trade and security. The U.K. and U.S. are already each other's largest investors, supporting growth and high-value jobs in both countries. The U.K.-California relationship is very close—California exports \$17.8 billion in goods and services to the U.K., supporting tens of thousands of jobs in the Golden State. We want to strengthen it further.

U.K.-U.S. Negotiations

We've made huge progress so far in U.K.-U.S. trade negotiations covering a number of areas of great importance to both the U.K. and California, including measures to support small and medium-sized enterprises. There are even more opportunities for us to explore though.

As two of the world's most advanced economies, our already-large digital trading relationship could benefit massively from ambitious and "future proofed" digital provisions. Crucially, a U.K.-U.S. deal can promote new sustainable growth and job opportunities in low-carbon areas.

U.K. and California

The U.K. is one of the most attractive markets for Californians to do business in.

Berkeley-based **Rigetti Computing** will develop its new Quantum Computer in the U.K., backed by \$13.6 million government and industry investment.

Los Angeles-based Hackman Capital Partners will invest more than \$400 million over the next three years into developing Eastbrook Studios, a new film and television

production hub in East London spread over 11 acres and 12 sound stages.

The U.K. is well-known for our talented and diverse workforce, as home to some of the world's best universities, for our commitment to the rule of law, and for our competitive tax environment. Our new Points Based Immigration System means U.S. nationals entering the U.K. will be treated exactly the same as EU nationals based on clear criteria.

Our local Department for International Trade team stands ready to support

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Allies Join CalChamber Call for COVID Business Relief

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Executive Action

The coalition specifically calls on the Governor to take executive action to:

- Suspend compliance with the California Family Rights Act for small businesses;
- End enforcement of structurally infeasible components of the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 emergency regulation—specifically those dealing with mandatory testing requirements and the payment of wages for employees excluded from the workplace due to COVID (since employees who test positive are already covered under Workers' Compensation and other provisions); and
- Temporarily delay the next installment of property taxes due in April 2021.

Joint Action

The coalition is asking the Governor and/or the Legislature to swiftly enact policies that will:

- Expedite additional financial resources to small businesses by expanding the eligibility pool and increasing the maximum amount of grants provided as well as providing immediate financial reimbursement or quarterly tax relief for employers who are investing in state-mandated upgrades or expenses related to the pandemic; and
- Allow employers to utilize net operating loss carry forwards and business tax credits suspended in 2020.

Legislation

The coalition is further asking the Legislature to consider and pass bills to:

- Eliminate disincentives for telecommuting;
- Relieve employers of abusive lawsuits under the Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA);
- Delay enforcement of new or updated regulations;
- Pay down the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Fund;
- Reject new taxes; and
- Eliminate barriers to housing by reforming the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and reinstating policies that encourage economic development.

A New Year, A New Deal: The UK's Future Relationship with California

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Californians looking to take advantage of these opportunities and we encourage you to get in touch with us.

Climate Change

We are excited to expand our already-close working relationship with California on our ambitious climate goals, from capping emissions to eliminating the sale of internal combustion engines, to ending a reliance on coal through the Powering Past Coal Alliance.

The U.K.'s new Nationally Determined Contribution under the

Paris Agreement commits us to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 68% by 2030; an important step toward reaching its ambitions for net zero by 2050. All of this is made possible by the government's [10-point plan for a green industrial revolution](#), which sets the direction for renewable energy, transportation innovations like "jet zero" and green ships, and green finance.

Opportunities

We are an ambitious nation with big ideas, fired up by new determination to grasp fresh opportunities. The U.K.

government sees 2021 as an opportunity to show what Global Britain means to the rest of the world by reasserting ourselves as a liberal and free trading nation and acting as a global force for good.

In these ways and others, we look forward to working with all of you across California and the incoming Biden administration to build back better.

Find out more about investing in, buying from or doing business with the U.K. at www.great.gov.uk/international/.
Staff Contact: Susanne T. Stirling

CalChamber-Sponsored Seminars/Trade Shows

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22–23, Online. (800) 331-8877.
HR Boot Camp Virtual Seminar.
CalChamber. March 4–5, Online.
(800) 331-8877.

International Trade

Global Outlook 2021. Northern California World Trade Center. January 26, Online. (916) 321-9154.

California Global Connect: Renewable Energy and Advanced Transportation Opportunities in Portugal and Spain. Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development. February 23–26, Online. (279) 666-9104.

Cyber Security Trade Mission to South America. U.S. Department

of Commerce, International Trade Administration. March 1–5 and March 8, Peru, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina (optional stop). (410) 962-4539; (202) 482-3773; (703) 235-0102.

Taiwan Trade Show 2021. Taiwan External Trade Development Council. March 1–October 30, Taiwan. 886-2-2725-5200.

2021 Smart City Summit & Expo, Taiwan. SCSE+. March 23–26, Taiwan. +866 2-2577-4249, ext. 255.

Cyber Security Business Development Mission to India. U.S. Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration. April 19–23, 2021, New Delhi, Mumbai, optional stops

in Bangalore or Hyderabad. (303) 844-5655; (202) 482-3773.

2021 SelectUSA Investment Summit. International Trade Administration. June 6–9, Washington, D.C. (800) 424-5249.

Expo Dubai 2021. Expo 2020 Dubai UAE. October 1, 2021–March 31, 2022, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. (+971) 800 EXPO (3976).

12th World Chambers Congress: Dubai 2021. International Chamber of Commerce World Chambers Federation and Dubai Chamber of Commerce & Industry. November 23–25, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. worldchamber-scongress@iccwbo.org

A View from the Netherlands

Innovative Spirit, Digital Connections Help Transition to Resilient Economic Future



The following answers to questions posed by the California Chamber of Commerce

are from Consul General Dirk Janssen, Consulate General of the Netherlands in San Francisco.

Netherlands-California Relations

Please describe your thoughts on the unique relationship between the Netherlands and California.

Look beyond the differences in size, geography and weather, and you'll see that the Netherlands and California are surprisingly similar. From a shared focus on innovation, to combatting climate change and finding smarter ways to grow crops, we continue to find a multitude of reasons to work together.

The Netherlands is the fifth most innovative country in the world and has a thriving startup ecosystem while California is home to Silicon Valley. You are the fifth largest economy in the world while we are the gateway to the European Union economy. The Port of Rotterdam and the Ports of Los Angeles/Long Beach are among the largest in the world.

And don't forget, we have similar world views of openness, tolerance and inclusiveness.

It's no surprise that the Netherlands is a top destination for California companies expanding into Europe. Trade with the Netherlands contributes to almost 90,000 full-time jobs in California.

What also brings us together is that we're both dealing with the same challenges: densely populated urban areas with no room to grow, rising sea levels in those same urban areas, and the environmental impact of agriculture.

In spite of these challenges, both California and the Netherlands remain optimistic about the future. Together we are looking to solve global challenges through innovative solutions, such as smart and electric mobility, hydrogen, and cycling infrastructure.

Our Holland in the Valley network connects Silicon Valley to the Dutch

which will be the most sustainable games ever and comes with a major investment in infrastructure and transportation. Our new Business Support Office in Los Angeles connects Dutch and American organizations and companies on this topic.

California is a large exporter of agricultural products. The Dutch expertise on agricultural technology, as well as our environmentally friendly greenhouses and strategic location has made us one of the largest exporters of agricultural products in the world. And this has proven to be interesting for farmers in California.

Lastly, it's our expertise in water management that brings us together with California communities. Dutch companies participated in the Bay Area Resilient by Design Challenge, finding solutions for rising sea levels. And this work continues through Henk Ovink, the Dutch Special Envoy International Water Affairs and Sherpa of the United Nations' High Level Panel on Water.

COVID-19 Economic Impact

As countries all over the world feel the pandemic, what is the economic impact of COVID-19 on the Netherlands?

Obviously, the pandemic has had a major impact on the Dutch economy, with initiatives canceled and the closure of restaurants, bars and shops. Our government has provided support measures for companies. Luckily, the online economy continues to thrive and e-commerce is growing rapidly. That is positive. Even before the pandemic, the Netherlands was the European country with the best digital infrastructure.

The way in which business in the Netherlands is done is changing profoundly. Potential business partners used to meet in real life, preferably over

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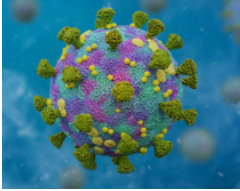
Consul General Dirk Janssen, Consulate General of the Netherlands in San Francisco

research ecosystem, which includes businesses and research and government institutions. With all our universities in the global top 200, we are a European hub for innovation and tech.

Just like the Netherlands is working hard to become fully circular by 2050, California is embracing a circular economy as well. Our consulate facilitates the exchange of expertise and best practices between Dutch and U.S. companies that are active in waste recycling, food, built environment, textiles, and so on.

In this regard, we also see a huge opportunity in working together toward the Olympics in Los Angeles in 2028,

Department of Public Health Seeks to Accelerate Vaccine Distribution



The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has issued recommendations for accelerating the pace at

which COVID-19 vaccines are distributed to Californians. Based upon the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, California will now offer the vaccine to everyone over the age of 65 after health care workers and long-term residents receive the inoculation.

The CDPH recently advised local health departments and providers to immediately administer the vaccine to individuals in all tiers of [Phase 1a](#). Group 1a is comprised of approximately 3 million people and includes health care workers and long-term care residents.

This demographic includes a wide

range of people in health care settings such as community health care workers, public health field staff, primary care clinics, specialty clinics, laboratory workers, dental clinics and pharmacy staff. With the CDC's most recent guidance, approximately 6.6 million California residents can now receive the vaccine.

California's tier-based system was intended to provide the vaccine to the most vulnerable citizens first; however, distribution and rollout efforts were inefficient, resulting in wasted doses and under-vaccination. This new approach is aimed to result in efficient and equitable distribution in the quickest manner possible.

Mass vaccination sites will be utilized to administer the shots; the sites will include Disneyland, CalExpo, Dodger Stadium, Petco Park, and possibly Levi's Stadium.

CalChamber has called for vaccine prioritization to be given to:

- Workers in the supply chain who are directly responsible for ensuring the safe and timely delivery of the vaccine itself;
- The most at-risk members of society when holistically considering comorbidities, virus exposure, living situation and ability to safely isolate, function and necessity of their critical work;
- Teachers, educators, and childcare providers who must return to the classroom and childcare settings for the benefit of children and so that parents can return to work when safe;
- Agricultural, food, beverage, medication/nutritional supplement workers who provide essential and necessary products to the population.

Staff Contact: Preston Young

CalChamber Supports Launch of Irish Guide for Investing in California



The California Chamber of Commerce joined a trade and investment round-

table with the American Chamber of Commerce in Ireland this week to celebrate the launch of *Invest in California: A Guide for Irish Companies*.

AmCham Ireland launched its guide on January 13 in association with the Consulate General of Ireland in San Francisco, Enterprise Ireland, and the California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz).

Roundtable host, AmCham Ireland's 2021 President, Gareth Lamb, put a spotlight on deepening trade ties between California and Ireland. Lamb is the head of Facebook Ireland and Facebook's vice president of international sales operations, further demonstrating the connection between Ireland and California, home to Facebook headquarters.

The roundtable featured California Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis and Irish Minister of State Robert Troy. Lieutenant Governor Kounalakis discussed the unique qualities of California that attract foreign investment.

Joining her later was Conor Neylan of AmCham Ireland, who led a more detailed discussion with Kaina Pereira, GO-Biz senior adviser of business development and international trade. Pereira highlighted GO-Biz tools for companies looking to invest in California, emphasizing that GO-Biz is there to walk companies through every step.

Troy, who is the Irish Minister of State with responsibility for trade promotion, spoke about the special connection that Ireland has to California.

The roundtable included discussion of Ireland's new [Global Ireland 2025](#) initiative. A key component of the initiative is enhancing trade and investment with California in order to double the scope and impact of Ireland's global footprint in the years ahead. [Enterprise Ireland](#), the government organization responsible for the development and growth of Irish enterprises in world markets, is working to help achieve this.

U.S.-Irish Trade

Two-way trade between the United States and Ireland totaled approximately \$70.79 billion in 2019. In 2019, the U.S. exported more than \$9.03 billion in goods to Ireland, a number that generally has increased over the previous years. Top exported products included chemicals,

computer and electronic products, oil and gas, and manufactured commodities.

The U.S. imported \$61.76 billion from Ireland in 2019, an increase from \$57.4 billion in 2018, with chemicals making up 71.7% of the total. (U.S. Department of Commerce)

California-Irish Trade

Irish companies employ approximately 100,000 Americans in the U.S., and of those about 10% or 10,000 jobs are in California, according to the Irish Consul General in San Francisco (February 2019). Approximately 140 Irish companies now are established in the Western United States, primarily in California. California-Irish ties run deep, with 10% of Bay Area residents identifying as Irish Americans.

In 2019, California exported almost \$1.1 billion to Ireland, providing 11.8% of total U.S. exports to Ireland, and making California one of the top exporting states to Ireland. Top exported products in 2019 included computers/electronic products and chemicals, accounting for 39% and 21.9% of the total, respectively, followed by manufactured commodities and special classification provisions.

Staff Contact: Susanne T. Stirling

Innovative Spirit, Digital Connections Help Economic Transition

From Page 7

coffee. This is now done virtually, and people have grown accustomed to it.

Even though meeting in person remains the preferred way of starting a conversation, my guess is that virtual meetings and digital campaigns are here to stay. It will create new possibilities. The pandemic will force us to explore innovative and creative solutions to running (and expanding) a business. This also holds true for us in the diplomatic world, working at a consulate.

In January 2020, we opened a Netherlands Business Support Office (NBSO) in Los Angeles, in addition to our Consulate General in San Francisco. Like so many companies, we too had to pivot our business. In June, we decided to launch our e-Consulate, which offers most of our services completely online.

In addition, we were able to host several digital trade missions: e-Mobility; Sports & Infrastructure in LA; Life Sciences and Health; and Hydrogen. By taking it online, we were able to reach an even wider group of companies by introducing them to opportunities in California.

Forging new connections is easier now, and this has brought the Netherlands and California even closer.

Future Opportunities

What are the challenges and opportunities facing the Netherlands?

The Netherlands has one of the most open and stable economies in the world and is among the best countries for technology and innovation. The current crisis is difficult, but we will overcome. The World Economic Forum, in its 2019 Global Competitiveness Index, ranks the Netherlands No. 1 in the world for macroeconomic stability, the most competitive economy in Europe, and the fourth most competitive economy in the world.

The Netherlands offers outstanding physical and digital infrastructure, including Europe's largest port, the Amsterdam Internet Exchange point AMS-IX, and world-class research institutes. Our government is enterprise-friendly and offers attractive incentives to stimulate innovation and sustainable business activities. As an internationally oriented

country, the Netherlands is home to a workforce that is highly proficient in English as well as many highly educated foreign workers.

We believe firmly that ambitious climate action can go hand-in-hand with economic growth and job creation. Green investments will make our economies more resilient to future shocks and are the best way to create well-paid local jobs that boost economic growth. Taking concrete measures today has clear co-benefits, such as healthier and smarter cities, increased food security, and innovative sustainable business opportunities.

Reducing our own emissions and striving for climate neutrality by 2050 is not an easy task, but we are pragmatic and determined, tackling this challenge in close cooperation with business and civil society. In the same spirit, we are ready to work in partnership with California to make the transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future and deliver on the Paris Agreement goals and the 2030 Agenda.

Staff Contact: Susanne T. Stirling



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