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September 9, 2022

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Vice Chair Nora Vargas
County of San Diego

Dear Supervisor Vargas,

On behalf of the Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce, I would like to provide comments on your proposed Board letter related to the warehouse worker ordinance.

Quality of life for workers, sustainability and workplace safety is of the utmost importance for our Otay Mesa Community and while we appreciate your desire to tackle these issues, we are certain the proposed direction that the County staff is being guided towards in drafting a new warehouse ordinance, will create the exact opposite effect that you would like to accomplish.

Small and medium warehouse operators, will not be able to carry the increased financial burden of the additional restrictions proposed in the potential ordinance:

- A new unnecessary operating permit that would finance County enforcement for existing California employment regulations.
A higher minimum wage only for warehouse workers
Restrictions on hiring temporary workers, which would lead to exacerbating the existing problem of hiring workers. Temp agencies actually help many warehouse employees transition temporary jobs to permanent jobs and trade related activities, including logistics, need flexibility to accommodate new and temporary clients.

These additional restrictions and over-regulation in only a small section of the County, will place East Otay Mesa at a huge disadvantage compared to the rest of the County precisely at a moment when we need our region to become more competitive. It will also increase land prices in the City portion of Otay Mesa due to the lack of employment lands in San Diego and because our community has so many trade stakeholders it will cause inflation to increase even more and supply chain delays will worsen.

The Otay Mesa Chamber proposes the following measures the County could spearhead in conjunction with the Chamber that would actually enhance the quality of life for workers:

- A) An effort to support the Commuter Card program for all US resident aliens, who are living in Tijuana, which would allow the approximate 60% of the Otay workforce, who is commuting from Tijuana, to apply for Sentri and dramatically reduce the wait times they experience at the border.
B) A campaign to ensure workers in the entire County comply with CAL-OSHA regulations, which are some of the strictest in the nation.

The majority of Otay warehouse operators are small and medium Hispanic family owned businesses, many owned by women; these are the companies that will be negatively impacted by the proposed ordinance.

Sincerely,
Alejandra Mier y Teran
Executive Director