

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SAN MATEO COUNTY SUPERVISORS PROVIDE LOCAL BUSINESSES RELIEF
FROM ANNUAL PERMITTING FEES**

***Supervisors Dave Pine and Warren Slocum Sponsor Effort to Provide Relief to
Local Businesses Impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic***

Redwood City – Today, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors authorized County Health to establish a permit fee relief program that would provide a one-time credit covering the costs of annual permit fees paid by certain local businesses regulated by the department.

The COVID-19 pandemic, and the series of state and local health orders restricting economic activity, had a devastating impact on many parts of the economy in San Mateo County, with revenue losses hitting small businesses particularly hard. Approximately 5 percent of retail food businesses regulated by County Health's Environmental Health Services (EHS) have shuttered permanently and many have struggled with reduced or even fully restricted operations for more than a year.

"Many local businesses are only now preparing for normal operation after 15 months of struggle," Pine said. "Providing relief from permitting fees is a means to help local businesses get up and running as soon as possible."

"The County of San Mateo has a solid record of helping small businesses during the pandemic," Slocum said. "I am proud to be a co-sponsor of the 'Environmental Health Permit Fee Relief Program' that will save our struggling businesses over \$5 million dollars in the year ahead."

Environmental Health Services performs regulatory oversight to over 14,000 businesses, implementing State regulations for operations in both incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county.

The types of regulated businesses include retail food, spas, medical waste, hazardous materials/waste storage, body art, massage, retail tobacco, stormwater, multifamily housing and short-term rentals, among many businesses. The annual permitting and inspection performed by EHS is paid for on a fee-for-service basis, meaning that businesses must pay for the cost of the regulatory service and issuance of associated permits.

"The Permit Fee Relief Program will help ensure over 5,400 businesses who have suffered financial losses due to Covid-19 will be able to use their funds for more urgent expenses and keep their business doors open in San Mateo County," said John Kevranian, owner of Nuts for Candy in Burlingame.

EHS fees are based on the average time it takes to oversee the business, which is influenced by the size of the business and the complexity of the operation, the risk to public health or the environment, and the associated frequency of inspection. Fees can vary from the low hundreds of dollars for small businesses to many thousands of dollars for larger enterprises like hotels.

“It will take most small business owners years to fully recover from COVID’s economic impacts. While we all celebrate full tables at restaurants, shoppers in stores, and office workers coming back in the coming months - we don’t see the credit card bills, unpaid rent, cashed-in 401k accounts, or loans used to survive the past 15 months,” said Amy Buckmaster, president & CEO of Chamber San Mateo County. “Once again, our Board of Supervisors and County leaders are stepping up with the Permit Fee Relief Program to offer a hand up to small business owners who gave it their all to survive this pandemic.”

It is anticipated that relief provided through this program will benefit more than 5,400 businesses throughout the county. The fee and industry categories covered by the program include certain businesses in: retail food; public pools and spas; body art and massage; hotels/motels/bed & breakfast; and commercial and industrial sectors.

Background information and the report on the program to the Board of Supervisors can be found on the [Board's website](#).

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