

August 19, 2021



The Honorable Nury Martinez  
President, Los Angeles City Council  
200 N Spring St., Ste 470  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Vaccination Requirements for Entering Indoor Spaces

Dear President Martinez,

On behalf of the Los Angeles grocery industry, we are reaching out under the invitation by City Council to discuss the Motion relative to vaccination requirements for eligible individuals entering indoor spaces (21-0878). As recognized in Council discussion, attention must be given to ensuring access for all individuals to food and medication. Appropriately, grocery stores have remained open through the entirety of the pandemic in order to keep critical goods and supplies flowing. As the primary provider for essential food and healthcare items we have concerns about any scenario that would deny someone access to these items.

We support the City of Los Angeles in its efforts to combat COVID-19 and the emerging Delta variant. Along with you, we have acted on the need for masking, social distancing, increased sanitization, supporting employees with supplemental sick leave, encouraging vaccinations for both employees and the public, and supporting employees receiving vaccinations through additional time off and incentives. The message from your discussion was clear – and we agree – vaccinations are the primary solution to escaping the impacts of COVID-19. This reasoning is why as an appointed member by Governor Newsom to the CDPH Community Vaccine Advisory Committee we advocated vigorously for and achieved vaccine priority for California’s grocery workers since February.

The challenges with vaccine verification at grocery stores is the possibility that unvaccinated or untested individuals could lose access to food, medicine and necessary health care items. While the grocery industry has offered throughout the pandemic alternatives to shopping in store, including online purchasing with delivery or curbside pick-up and offering shopping options while customers wait outside, these options are not always utilized. We are also concerned with the consequences of denying entry to a grocery store to an individual who is in urgent need of essential items offered by stores due to lack of vaccination or testing proof or if access to that information is not immediately available to them for whatever reason when attempting to enter the store.

As we both agree vaccinations are the ultimate solution to stop the spread of COVID-19. Our industry has actively pursued vaccinating all individuals who are eligible, both employees and customers alike. Grocers throughout Los Angeles are actively offering the vaccine or hosting and promoting vaccination events along with partnering with state and local health departments to promote the need for vaccinations. We welcome opportunities to join the city in its efforts to similarly encourage and facilitate vaccinations for Angelenos.

However, since requiring grocery customers to verify vaccination or negative tests has significant challenges, we welcome conversations between the city and grocers on other policy options aimed directly at preventing the contraction of COVID-19.

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Thank you for your commitment and determination to continue to fight the spread of COVID-19. We look forward to further conversation about the challenges for vaccination and testing verification at grocery stores as well as exploring other strategies and policy options to increase vaccination rates in Los Angeles.

Sincerely,

  
Timothy James  
Director, Local Government Relations  
California Grocers Association

CC:     Members, Los Angeles City Council  
          Mayor Eric Garcetti, City of Los Angeles  
          Mr. Mike Feuer, City Attorney, City of Los Angeles  
          Ms. Sharon Tso, Chief Legislative Analyst, City of Los Angeles  
          Ms. Carolyn M. Hull, General Manager, Los Angeles Economic and Workforce  
                                  Development Department  
          Ms. Holly L. Wolcott, City Clerk, City of Los Angeles