



VIA EMAIL  
March 13, 2020

Mayor Jesse Arreguin and City Council  
City of Berkeley  
2180 Milvia St.  
Berkeley, CA 94704

To the Mayor and Berkeley City Council,

As you know, Berkeley is a city of small businesses; many of whom have already seen a 25-75% drop in gross receipts since the COVID-19 outbreak as compared to this time last year. The situation is quickly going from bad to worse, with many of our arts and entertainment venues having closed or likely needing to close soon. Many small businesses, nonprofits, arts organizations, and other businesses do not have a cushion in their budget to weather this type of pandemic. It is incumbent upon the City of Berkeley to do what is necessary to help these businesses survive the economic impact of this unprecedented crisis. Hence, we request that the City immediately consider taking the following measures, similar to action recently taken in New York City and San Francisco:

1. Defer, discount or waive (or even refund, or do not deposit recent) business taxes and fees (for nonprofits where applicable) including garbage collection, health inspection, and business license fees.
2. Start a fund for small business and nonprofits with grants for up to \$10,000 to provide immediate relief (e.g., with fewer than five employees and up to 40% of payroll costs for two months).
3. Provide interest-free loans up to \$75,000 for businesses and nonprofits with 25% or more drop in gross receipts, if SBA loans prove insufficient in timing, amount or rate.
4. Request that the Governor declare an economic emergency disaster to activate immediate SBA loans and defer payroll and other taxes.
5. Seek unemployment benefits and additional support at the local, state and federal level for employees and contract workers with significant loss of income.
6. Establish a moratorium on new business regulations (e.g., Fair Workweek, Healthy Checkout, etc).

Sincerely,

Kirsten MacDonald, CEO  
Berkeley Chamber

John Caner, CEO  
Downtown Berkeley  
Association

Alex Knox, Executive Director  
Telegraph Business  
Improvement District

Barbara Hillman, CEO  
Visit Berkeley