#### **ORDINANCE NO. 2021-06**

AN URGENCY ORDINANCE OF THE ALBANY CITY COUNCIL AMENDING AND EXTENDING PREMIUM PAY FOR GROCERY, DRUG RETAIL AND CERTAIN RETAIL WORKERS WORKING IN ALBANY AND SETTING FORTH THE FACTS CONSTITUTING SUCH URGENCY

#### THE ALBANY CITY COUNCIL ORDAINS AS FOLLOWS:

## **SECTION 1: FINDINGS.**

- A. The novel coronavirus 19 ("COVID-19") disease is caused by a virus that spreads easily from person to person and may result in serious illness or death, and is classified by the World Health Organization ("WHO") as a worldwide pandemic.
- B. COVID-19 has broadly spread throughout California and remains a significant health risk to the community, especially members of our most vulnerable populations.
- C. The WHO has declared that COVID-19 is a global pandemic, which is particularly severe in high-risk populations such as people with underlying medical conditions and the elderly, and the WHO has raised the health emergency to the highest level, requiring dramatic interventions to disrupt the spread of this disease.
- D. On March 4, 2020, California Governor Gavin Newsom proclaimed a state of emergency in response to new cases of COVID-19, directing state agencies to use all resources necessary to prepare for and respond to the outbreak.
- E. On March 16, 2020, the City Council of the City of Albany proclaimed the existence of a local emergency in response to new cases of COVID-19, authorizing the City Council to exercise the emergency powers necessary to take extraordinary measures to prevent death or injury of persons and to protect the public peace, safety and welfare, and alleviate damage, loss, hardship or suffering.
- F. On March 19, 2020, Governor Newsom issued a "Stay Home Stay Healthy" proclamation closing all non-essential workplaces, requiring people to stay home except to participate in essential activities or to provide essential business services, and banning all gatherings for social, spiritual, and recreational purposes. In addition to healthcare, public health

and emergency services, the "Stay Home – Stay Healthy" proclamation identified grocery stores as essential business sectors critical to protecting the health and well-being of all Californians and designated their workers as essential critical infrastructure workers.

- G. On March 18, 2020, the Alameda County Public Health Officer issued the "Shelter in Place" Order to control the effects and spread of COVID-19 by closing all non-essential workplaces, requiring people to stay home except to participate in essential activities or to provide essential business services. In addition to healthcare, public health and emergency services, the "Shelter in Place" Order identified grocery stores, pharmacies and other retailers that sell food or beverage products, and animal/pet food as essential business sectors critical to protecting the health and well-being of all Californians and designated their workers as essential critical infrastructure workers.
- H. On December 3, 2020, Governor Newsom extended the "Stay Home Stay Healthy" proclamation using regional availability of intensive care unit (ICU) beds to implement a Regional Stay-At-Home Order. The State's Order would go into effect when a region's ICU availability falls below 15 percent and would remain in effect for a minimum of three weeks. Additionally, all private gatherings of any size would be prohibited and non-essential travel restricted. The Order came after many Americans gathered and traveled over the Thanksgiving holiday in the midst of a winter surge of COVID-19 cases and deaths.
- I. Effective December 7, 2020, the Alameda County Health Officer, along with five other Bay Area Health Officers, moved to implement the State's Regional Stay-At-Home Order, rather than waiting until ICU bed availability reached critical levels. Nevertheless, as of December 16, 2020, ICU bed capacity in the Bay Area Region fell below the 15 percent threshold. During this time, grocery, drug retail and certain retail workers report to work while others are directed to remain home to slow the spread of the virus.
- J. On January 25, 2021 Governor Newsom lifted the statewide stay-at-home order, returning counties back to a tiered system.
- K. On January 25, 2021, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) ended the Regional Stay at Home Order, lifting the order for all regions statewide, including the Bay Area. This action allowed all counties to return to the Blueprint for a Safer Economy framework

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which uses color-coded tiers to indicate which activities and businesses can open based on local case rates and test positivity. At that time, Alameda County was in the strictest tier, the Purple Tier. Alameda County met the metrics for the Red Tier on March 9, 2021.

- L. On March 30, 2021, Alameda County met the metrics for the Orange Tier where the virus remains a moderate threat. As of March 30, 2021, Alameda County's adjusted daily new case rate is 2.6 per 100,000 residents and vaccinations are progressing. However, as more activities and businesses open indoors and more people from different households mix, the risk of becoming infected increases. In a press release, the Alameda County Health Officer, Dr. Nicholas Moss stated: "Variants of the virus that causes COVID-19 are circulating in our county, case rates are rising in other parts of the country and, while nearly a quarter of Alameda County residents aged 16 and older have been fully vaccinated, we aren't at the levels required for broad community protection or immunity." The new variants of COVID-19 are being studied, and these variants may spread more easily, may have increased risk of death, or may have mutations which could affect the virus' ability to be recognized by antibodies.
- M. As of April 6, 2021, the WHO reported a global total of 131,487,572 cases of COVID-19, including 2,857,702 deaths; California reported 3,583,830 cases of COVID-19, including 58,541 deaths; Alameda County reported 83,864 cases of COVID-19 (with 327 cases in Albany) including 1,426 deaths.
- N. Grocery, drug retail and certain retail stores are essential businesses operating in Albany during the COVID-19 emergency making these workers highly vulnerable to economic insecurity and health or safety risks.
- Workers working for grocery stores, drug retail, and certain retail stores are O. essential workers who perform services that are fundamental to the economy and health of the community during the COVID-19 crisis. They work in high-risk conditions with inconsistent access to protective equipment and other safety measures; work indoors in public situations with limited ability to engage in physical distancing; and continually expose themselves and the public to the spread of disease. A NBC Investigation article from January 15, 2021, discovered 146 outbreaks in December alone at supermarkets in the Los Angeles area, according to data

obtained from the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 324.<sup>1</sup> On January 10, 2021, the Sacramento Bee reported 342 cases in December among the Raley's network of 126 stores in Northern California.<sup>2</sup> Drug retail and certain retail employees selling grocery, beverage, drug and household products face similar risks since they work under these same conditions. COVID-19 outbreaks hit several large retail chains throughout Los Angeles County infecting over 900 workers during a two week period in January, 2021 following the rush of holiday shopping.<sup>3</sup> This, while grocery stores and retail companies across the country have seen record profits. The Brookings Institute found that top retail companies had a 39% increase in profit, averaging an extra \$16.9 billion in 2020.<sup>4</sup>

- P. Premium pay, paid in addition to regular wages, is an established type of compensation for employees performing hazardous duty or work involving physical hardship that can cause extreme physical discomfort and distress. Many hiring entities paid premium pay to its workers earlier in the pandemic, which demonstrates that it is an appropriate means of compensating workers for increases hazards at work.
- Q. Grocery, drug retail and certain retail workers working during the COVID-19 emergency merit additional compensation because they are performing hazardous duty due to the significant risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus. Grocery, drug retail and certain retail workers have been working under these hazardous conditions for months. They are working in these hazardous conditions now and will continue to face safety risks as the virus presents an ongoing threat for an uncertain period, potentially resulting in subsequent waves of infection.
- R. The availability of grocery drug retail and certain retail stores is fundamental to the health of the community and is made possible during the COVID-19 emergency because

<sup>1</sup> Grover, Joel & Davis, Josh, "COVID Outbreaks Skyrocket at SoCal Supermarkets" NBC4, published 1/15/21, available at: https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/ovid-outbreaks-skyrocket-at-socal-supermarkets/2507053/

<sup>2</sup> Smith, Darrell, "It's their lives: California's grocery workers navigate COVID outbreaks, fears" Sacramento Bee, published 1/10/21, available at: <a href="https://www.sacbee.com/news/coronavirus/article248386620.html">https://www.sacbee.com/news/coronavirus/article248386620.html</a>

<sup>3</sup> Kay, Grace, "Retail giants Target, Amazon, and Home Depot have been hit by COVID-19 outbreaks in Los Angeles County," Business Insider, published 1/7/2021, available at <a href="https://www.businessinsider.com/target-amazon-and-home-depot-hit-by-outbreak-2021-1">https://www.businessinsider.com/target-amazon-and-home-depot-hit-by-outbreak-2021-1</a>

<sup>4</sup> Kinder, Molly, Stateler, Laura & Du, Julia, "Windfall profits and deadly risks: How the biggest retail companies are compensating essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic," Brookings Institution, published Nov., 2020, available at: https://www.brookings.edu/essay/windfall-profits-and-deadly-risks/

grocery, drug retail and certain retail workers are on the frontlines of this devastating pandemic supporting public health, safety, and welfare by working in hazardous situations. A study of essential workers has also shown an accelerated risk of coronavirus infection faced by workers in customer-centric roles, including retail workers.<sup>5,6</sup> Another article from CNBC reports how the toll of COVID has been particularly hard on grocery store workers who cannot work from home and often have low pay and limited benefits.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, new and potentially more contagious variants of the coronavirus that have been detected in California.

- S. Establishing an immediate requirement for grocery, drug retail and retail stores to provide premium pay to grocery, drug retail and certain retail workers protects public health, supports stable incomes, and promotes job retention by ensuring that these workers are compensated for the substantial risks, efforts, and expenses they are undertaking to provide essential services in a safe and reliable manner during the COVID-19 emergency.
- T. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, this Ordinance aims to protect and promote the public health, safety, and welfare during the coronavirus 19 (COVID-19) emergency by requiring grocery, drug retail and certain retail stores to provide premium pay for their workers performing work in Albany. Requiring grocery, drug retail and certain retail stores to provide premium pay to their workers compensates them for the risks of working during a pandemic. Grocery, drug retail and certain retail workers face magnified risks of catching or spreading the COVID-19 disease because the nature of their work involves close contact with the public, including members of the public who are not showing symptoms of COVID-19 but who can spread the disease. The provision of premium pay better ensures the retention of these essential workers who are on the frontlines of this pandemic providing essential services and

5 Chen, Yea-Hung et al., Excess mortality associated with the COVID-19 pandemic among Californians 18–65 years of age, by occupational sector and occupation: March through October 2020, medRxiv 2021.01.21.21250266; doi: available at: <a href="https://doi.org/10.1101/2021.01.21.21250266">https://doi.org/10.1101/2021.01.21.21250266</a>

<sup>6</sup> Lan F, Suharlim C, Kales SN, et al., Association between SARS-CoV-2 infection, exposure risk and mental health among a cohort of essential retail workers in the USA. Occupational and Environmental Medicine 2021; 78:237-243. Available at: https://oem.bmj.com/content/78/4/237

<sup>7</sup> Repko, Melissa, "We Haven't Learned: Grocery workers face new challenges as Covid worsens, pandemic fatigue sets in" CNBC, published 11/23/20, available at: <a href="https://www.cnbc.com/2020/11/23/grocery-workers-face-new-challenges-as-covid-worsens-fatigue-sets-in.html">https://www.cnbc.com/2020/11/23/grocery-workers-face-new-challenges-as-covid-worsens-fatigue-sets-in.html</a>

who are needed throughout the duration of the COVID-19 emergency. As such, they are deserving of fair and equitable compensation for their work.

- U. On April 5, 2021, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 2021-04, an urgency ordinance establishing premium pay and associated labor protections for grocery workers. The City Council also directed that the ordinance be amended to include additional retail workers, as set forth in this Ordinance.
- V. This Ordinance is adopted pursuant to the City's police powers and powers afforded to the city in time of national, state, county and local emergency during an unprecedented health pandemic, such powers being afforded by the State Constitution, State law and Section 2-16 of the Albany Municipal Code to protect the peace, health, and safety of the public. The Albany City Council finds that this Ordinance is necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, and safety of grocery, drug retail and certain retail workers working in Albany and finds urgency to approve this Ordinance immediately based on the facts described herein and detailed in the staff report. Under Government Code Section 8634, this ordinance is necessary to provide for the protection of health, life and property.

# **SECTION 2: PRIOR ORDINANCE REPEALED.**

Ordinance No. 2021-04 is repealed and replaced with the terms of this Ordinance as set forth herein.

# SECTION 3: PREMIUM PAY FOR GROCERY, DRUG RETAIL AND CERTAIN RETAIL WORKERS.

A. Definitions.

For purposes of this Ordinance:

"Adverse action" means reducing the compensation to a covered worker, garnishing gratuities, temporarily or permanently denying or limiting access to work, incentives, or bonuses, offering less desirable work, demoting, terminating, deactivating, putting a covered worker on hold status, failing to rehire after a seasonal interruption of work,

threatening, penalizing, retaliating, or otherwise discriminating against a covered worker for any reason prohibited by this ordinance. "Adverse action" also encompasses any action by the hiring entity or a person acting on the hiring entity's behalf that would dissuade a covered worker from exercising any right afforded by this ordinance.

"Aggrieved party" means a covered worker or other person who suffers tangible or intangible harm due to a hiring entity or other person's violation of this ordinance.

"City" means the City of Albany.

"Covered worker" means a retail worker employed directly by a hiring entity who is entitled to premium pay pursuant to this Ordinance.

"Drug retail store" means a store that sells a variety of prescription and nonprescription medicines and miscellaneous items, including but not limited to, drugs, pharmaceuticals, sundries, produce, meats, poultry, fish, deli products, dairy products, canned foods, dry foods, beverages, prepared foods, and other merchandise (also referred to as drug retail products).

"Grocery store" means a store that devotes seventy percent (70%) or more of its business to retailing a general range of food products, which may be fresh or packaged. There is a rebuttable presumption that if a store receives seventy percent (70%) or more revenue from retailing a general range of food products, then it qualifies as a grocery store.

"Hiring entity" means a grocery store, drug retail store or retail store that employs over three hundred (300) workers nationally and employs more than fifteen (15) employees per store in the City of Albany.

"Premium pay" means additional compensation owed to a covered worker that is separate from hiring entity payments for providing services, bonuses, and commissions, as well as tips earned from customers. Hiring entities that have already established and are currently paying premium pay due to COVID-19 to covered workers shall be credited for premium pay currently being paid during the effective term of this ordinance.

"Respondent" means a grocery store, drug retail store or retail store, or the parent company or any person who is alleged or found to have committed a violation of this Ordinance.

"Retail store" is a store that is over 10,000 square feet, and dedicates 10 percent or more of its sales floor to retailing a general range of food or beverage products, or 10 percent or more of its sales floor to a general range of drug retail products.

"Retail worker" means a worker employed directly by a hiring entity at a grocery store, drug retail store, or retail store. Retail worker does not include managers, supervisors or confidential employees.

## B. Retail worker coverage.

For the purposes of this Ordinance, covered workers are limited to those retail workers who perform work for a hiring entity where the work is performed in the City of Albany.

#### C. Hiring entity coverage.

- 1. For purposes of this Ordinance, hiring entities are limited to those who employ over three hundred (300) retail workers nationally and employ more than fifteen (15) employees per store in the City of Albany.
- 2. To determine the number of retail workers employed for the current calendar year:
- a. The calculation is based upon the average number per calendar week of retail workers who worked for compensation during the preceding calendar year for any and all weeks during which at least one (1) retail worker worked for compensation. For hiring entities that did not have any retail workers during the preceding calendar year, the number of retail workers employed for the current calendar year is calculated based upon the average number per calendar week of

1	retail workers who worked for compensation during the first ninety (90) calendar
2	days of the current year in which the hiring entity engaged in business.
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4	b. All retail workers who worked for compensation shall be counted,
5	including but not limited to:
6 7	i. Retail workers who are not covered by this Ordinance; and
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9	ii. Retail workers who worked in Albany.
10	D. Premium pay requirement.
11	1. Hiring entities shall provide each retail worker with premium pay consisting of
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13	an additional Five Dollars (\$5.00) per hour for each hour worked.
14	2. The premium pay requirement of this Section 3 shall be in effect for a minimum
15	of sixty (60) days as set forth below, and until the County of Alameda is in the
16	Yellow Tier of the California Department of Public Health Blueprint for a Safer
17	Economy framework:
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19	a. Grocery Stores: April 6, 2021 through June 5, 2021;
20	b. Drug Retail and Retail Stores: April 20, 2021 through June 19, 2021.
21	E. Retail worker and consumer protections.
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23	1. No hiring entity shall, as a result of this Ordinance going into effect, take any
24	of the following actions:
25	a. Reduce a retail worker's compensation;
26	b. Limit a retail worker's earning capacity.
	o. Limit a ician worker a carming capacity.
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2. It shall be a violation if this Ordinance is a motivating factor in a hiring entity's decision to take any of the actions in Subsection E.1 unless the hiring entity can prove that its decision to take the action(s) would have happened in the absence of this Ordinance going into effect.

# F. Notice of rights.

- 1. Hiring entities shall provide covered workers with a written notice of rights established by this Ordinance. The notice of rights shall be in a form and manner sufficient to inform covered workers of their rights under this Ordinance. The notice of rights shall provide information on:
  - a. The right to premium pay guaranteed by this Ordinance;
  - b. The right to be protected from retaliation for exercising in good faith the rights protected by this Ordinance; and
  - c. The right to bring a civil action for a violation of the requirements of this Ordinance, including a hiring entity's denial of premium pay as required by this Ordinance and a hiring entity or other person's retaliation against a covered worker or other person for asserting the right to premium pay or otherwise engaging in an activity protected by this Ordinance.
- 2. Hiring entities shall provide the notice of rights required by posting a written notice of rights in a location of the store utilized by employees for breaks, and in an electronic format that is readily accessible to the covered workers. The notice of rights shall be made available to the covered workers via smartphone application or an online web portal, in English and any language that the hiring entity knows or has reason to know is the primary language of the covered worker(s).
- G. Hiring entity records.

- 1. Hiring entities shall retain records that document compliance with this Ordinance for covered workers.
- 2. Hiring entities shall retain the records required above for a period of two (2) years.
- 3. If a hiring entity fails to retain adequate records required under this Ordinance, there shall be a presumption, rebuttable by clear and convincing evidence, that the hiring entity violated this Ordinance for each covered worker for whom records were not retained.

#### H. Retaliation prohibited.

No hiring entity employing a covered worker shall discharge, reduce in compensation, or otherwise discriminate against any covered worker for opposing any practice proscribed by this Ordinance, for participating in proceedings related to this Ordinance, for seeking to exercise their rights under this Ordinance by any lawful means, or for otherwise asserting rights under this Ordinance.

#### I. Violation.

The failure of any respondent to comply with any requirement imposed on the respondent under this Ordinance is a violation.

#### J. Remedies.

- 1. The payment of unpaid compensation, liquidated damages, civil penalties, penalties payable to aggrieved parties, fines, and interest provided under this Ordinance is cumulative and is not intended to be exclusive of any other available remedies, penalties, fines, and procedures.
- 2. A respondent found to be in violation of this Ordinance for retaliation under Section H above shall be subject to any appropriate relief at law or equity

including, but not limited to reinstatement of the aggrieved party, front pay in lieu of reinstatement with full payment of unpaid compensation plus interest in favor of the aggrieved party under the terms of this Ordinance, and liquidated damages in an additional amount of up to twice the unpaid compensation.

#### K. Private right of action.

1. Any covered worker that suffers financial injury as a result of a violation of this Ordinance, or is the subject of prohibited retaliation under Section H, may bring a civil action in a court of competent jurisdiction against the hiring entity or other person violating this Ordinance and, upon prevailing, may be awarded reasonable attorney's fees and costs and such legal or equitable relief as may be appropriate to remedy the violation including, without limitation: the payment of any unpaid compensation plus interest due to the person and liquidated damages in an additional amount of up to twice the unpaid compensation; and a reasonable penalty payable to any aggrieved party if the aggrieved party was subject to prohibited retaliation.

#### L. Encouragement of more generous policies.

- 1. Nothing in this Ordinance shall be construed to discourage or prohibit a hiring entity from the adoption or retention of premium pay policies more generous than the one required herein.
- 2. Nothing in this Ordinance shall be construed as diminishing the obligation of a hiring entity to comply with any contract or other agreement providing more generous protections to a retail worker than required by this Ordinance.

#### M. Other legal requirements.

This Ordinance provides minimum requirements for premium pay while working for a hiring entity during the COVID-19 emergency and shall not be construed to preempt,

limit, or otherwise affect the applicability of any other law, regulation, requirement, policy, or standard that provides for higher premium pay, or that extends other protections to retail workers; and nothing in this Ordinance shall be interpreted or applied so as to create any power or duty in conflict with federal or state law. Nothing in this Section shall be construed as restricting a retail worker's right to pursue any other remedies at law or equity for violation of their rights.

#### N. Exemption for collective bargaining agreement.

All of the provisions of this Ordinance, or any part thereof, may be expressly waived in a collective bargaining agreement, but only if the waiver is explicitly set forth in the agreement in clear and unambiguous terms. Unilateral implementation of terms and conditions of employment by either party to a collective bargaining relationship shall not constitute a waiver of all or any of the provisions of this Ordinance.

# O. No waiver of rights.

Except for workers covered by a collective bargaining agreement pursuant to Section N, any waiver by a retail worker of any or all provisions of this Ordinance shall be deemed contrary to public policy and shall be void and unenforceable. Other than in connection with the bona fide negotiation of a collective bargaining agreement, any request by a hiring entity to a retail worker to waive rights given by this Ordinance shall be a violation of this Ordinance.

# **SECTION 4: URGENCY FINDINGS.**

Pursuant to California Government Code Section 36937, this Ordinance is designed to protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the City of Albany and becomes effective immediately up adoption by a four-fifths (4/5) vote of the City Council. The City Council hereby finds that there is an urgent need to adopt these regulations in order to address the current and immediate threats set forth above. Given the uncertain and evolving nature of the pandemic, the premium

# **SECTION 5: CEQA – EXEMPTION.**

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The City Council determines that the adoption of this Urgency Ordinance is exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to the following provisions of the CEQA Guidelines, 14 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3: this Urgency Ordinance is exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5) in that it is not a "project" under CEQA, and will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. This ordinance only regulates the pay and protections for grocery workers and those matters would not result in physical changes to the environment.

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#### **SECTION 6: SEVERABILITY.**

If any section, subsection, subdivision, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance or any part thereof is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or invalid or ineffective by any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity or effectiveness of the remaining portions of this Ordinance or any part thereof. The City Council of the City of Albany hereby declares that it would have passed each section, subsection, subdivision, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase thereof irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, subdivisions, paragraphs, sentences, clauses or phrases be declared unconstitutional or invalid or ineffective.

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#### **SECTION 7: PUBLICATION AND EFFECTIVE DATE.**

This Ordinance shall be posted at three public places within the City of Albany and shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

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**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the City Council of the City of Albany at its meeting on the 19th day of April, 2021 by the following vote:

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- AYES: Council Members McQuaid, Nason, Tiedemann, and Mayor Gary
- 25 NOES: Council Member Jordan
- 26 ABSENT:

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ABSTAIN:

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GE'NELL GARY, MAYOR



# City of Albany

1000 San Pablo Avenue • Albany, California 94706 (510) 528-5710 • www.albanyca.org

#### ORDINANCE NO. 2021-06

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ALBANY,

The 19th day of April, 2021, by the following votes:

AYES: Council Members McQuaid, Nason, Tiedemann and Mayor Gary

NOES: Council Member Jordan

ABSENT: none

ABSTAINED: none

RECUSED: none

WITNESS MY HAND AND THE SEAL OF THE CITY OF ALBANY, this

20th day of April, 2021.

Anne Hsu
CITY CLERK