



PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS

IN CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT

April 29, 2020

Mr. Daniel Kim
Director, Department of General Services
707 3rd Street
West Sacramento, CA 95605

RE: Safe State Workplaces in the Coronavirus Era

Dear Director Kim:

Governor Newsom and his Administration are contemplating how to safely reopen California businesses and communities, and resume all aspects of living under the new normal threat of COVID-19 in our state. We write on behalf of California's state engineers and related professionals to ask that the Department of General Services (DGS), with its state agency partners, undertake a similar thorough evaluation to determine when and how to safely reopen state workplaces and buildings.

We also ask, given the threat of coronavirus, to include in your assessment how state workplaces will meet the physical distancing requirements between employees that are recommended by the CDC and public health officials to drastically reduce virus transmission.

In the new state office buildings coming online soon and in all state workplaces, PECC strongly supports DGS's efforts to improve our energy efficiency, reduce water usage, and ensure that workplaces are welcoming to employees, the public, and stakeholders we serve.

However, we would ask that the state carefully evaluate many of the general design philosophies that DGS and state departments have adopted in recent years. Simply, those philosophies call for open floor plans, unstructured so-called collaborative workspaces, and fewer private offices and areas. They also encourage workspaces that are shared by two or more employees, increase densities by cutting the space allotted to all classifications of employees, and drastically limit the height of cubicles.

It is our understanding that dense, open floor designs are currently planned for the interiors of the new state buildings scheduled to open later this year and next, and for reconfigurations of existing workspaces. Given the ongoing coronavirus outbreak and

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the threat posed by similar, ever-evolving diseases in the future, we wonder if it might be a good time to evaluate again what constitutes a safe and modern state workplace for employees and the many constituencies that carry out business with the state every day.

PECG would welcome the opportunity to take part in any evaluation process to update workplace guidelines as we contemplate reopening state offices and buildings in the days ahead. We would simply urge that your department's guidance make the health and safety of employees and the public the top priority.

Thank you for the opportunity to share PECG's perspective. If you would like to discuss this matter or have any questions, please contact Ted Toppin at toppin@pecg.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Mello". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Joe Mello
PECG President

cc: Ann O'Leary, Governor's Chief of Staff
Ana J. Matosantos, Cabinet Secretary
Keely Bosler, Director, Department of Finance
Agency Secretaries
Department Directors