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July 23, 2018

The Honorable Susan Eggman
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for AB 186 (Eggman) – Safer Drug Consumption Program

Dear Assemblymember Eggman,

The San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, representing thousands of local businesses, thanks you for sponsoring Assembly Bill 186. This bill would permit certain localities to authorize the operation of supervised injection service programs (SISP) for adults, provided they abide by certain rules.

In San Francisco, the opioid epidemic has led to a stark increase in public injections, syringes on the street, and persons living in public spaces. The San Francisco Department of Health estimates that San Francisco has 22,500 citizens who inject drugs and experience over 100 overdose deaths a year. The conditions on our streets are unacceptable and the Chamber is committed to finding creative solutions to both help those in need while also providing a minimum level of safety and cleanliness.

Earlier this year the Chamber led a delegation of business and civic leaders to Vancouver to visit InSite, a SISP that started in 2003 under special exemption from the Canadian Federal Government. There we saw firsthand what over 30 medical studies have shown, that supervised injection services reduce deaths, increase diversion to detox programs, reduce public syringes and save public dollars. A 2016 cost-benefit analysis of potential safe injection services in San Francisco found that the City would save \$3.5 million per year if one safe injection program were opened, or \$2.33 for every dollar spent on the services. Additionally, studies have shown that SISP do not increase drug injection, drug trafficking or crime in the surrounding area.

The City and County of San Francisco is currently looking to open SISP, yet legal risks at the federal and state level have slowed implantation. In addition to risk of legal action by the federal government, there are numerous state laws that would place the City, the service provider and their employees at risk for providing this supervised injection services. AB 186 would reduce the legal risks to operate these programs as they would provide temporary state authorization to operate, pending enabling local legislation, starting in January 2019 and going through January 1, 2022.

Your bill would help pave the way for San Francisco, and other interested jurisdictions, to implement this common-sense, empirically studied, and medically sound program. The San Francisco Chamber of Commerce supports AB 186 and thanks you for sponsoring this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tallia A. Hart".

Tallia A. Hart
President & CEO
San Francisco Chamber of Commerce

cc: Senator Henry Stern, Senator Richard Pan, Senator Scott Wiener, Assemblymember David Chiu, Assemblymember Phil Ting, Mayor London Breed