Urging State Officials to Reconsider the Closure of Outdoor Public Playgrounds

Resolution urging Governor Gavin Newsom, California Department of Health Acting Director Sandra Shewry, and Acting State Health Officer Dr. Erica S. Pan to reconsider the closure of outdoor public playgrounds as part of the December 3, 2020, Regional Stay at Home Order in response to rising rates of COVID-19 infection.

WHEREAS, Due to an unprecedented 112% rise in the rates of daily COVID-19 infection, as well as the recent doubling of hospital admissions rates due to the spread of the coronavirus and the concern that without intervention, Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds in the State of California would be at capacity by mid-December, aggressive action was taken and the Acting State Public Health Officer issued a statewide Stay at Home Order starting on December 5, 2020, that will last at least three weeks; and

WHEREAS, The recent Stay at Home Order includes the closure of outdoor public playgrounds while allowing other activities and venues such as shopping at in-door malls; and

WHEREAS, According to the most updated reports from the World Health Organization (WHO), current research indicates that COVID-19 is primarily transmitted through respiratory droplets that are spread when an infected individual coughs, sneezes, or talks; and

WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have advised that shared or public surfaces are not the main way that COVID-19 is transmitted; and

WHEREAS, Studies have shown that COVID-19 is spread less easily outdoors, and outdoor activity is considered low-risk provided that certain safety precautions such as wearing a mask and social distancing are observed; and

WHEREAS, Experts including Harvard Medical School physician Doctor Abraar Karan agree that allowing children to access playgrounds is a low-risk activity when certain
precautions are observed including avoiding overcrowding, regularly cleaning high-touch areas, and making sure hands are sanitized when play is over; and

WHEREAS, Out of the tens of thousands of research papers published on COVID-19, not one of them has found playgrounds to be a significant source of transmission; and

WHEREAS, Playground play is beneficial for the mental health of children and their parents; and

WHEREAS, The mental health of children and their parents has been heavily impacted by blanket stay at home orders that (1) restrict children to indoor activities; (2) limit their ability to play and exercise their growing bodies; and (3) manage the stress and anxiety brought on by the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Children in low-income families, particularly children in dense, urban areas that live in apartment buildings without access to private yards, suffer the most from playgrounds being shut down; and

WHEREAS, The Tenderloin is one of the most densely populated neighborhoods in the city and is the neighborhood with the highest concentration of children in all of San Francisco, and it is also the neighborhood with the least amount of open space, which has left the many children of the Tenderloin trapped in small apartments for almost a year; and

WHEREAS, Access to playgrounds like those at Father Alfred E. Boeddeker Park, Sergeant John Macaulay Park, Turk and Hyde Mini Park, the Helen Diller Civic Center Playground, and Victoria Manalo Draves Park can be stewarded and maintained to help maintain safety protocols, provide vital opportunities for exercise and recreation, and keep our children and families safe; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges Governor Gavin Newsom, Director Sandra Shewry, and Dr. Erica S. Pan to reconsider the closure of outdoor public playgrounds as part of the most recent Regional Stay at Home Order; and, be it
FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors directs the Clerk of the Board to transmit copies of this Resolution to the offices of California Governor Gavin Newsom, California Department of Health Acting Director Sandra Shewry, and Acting State Health Officer Dr. Erica S. Pan; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors directs the Clerk of the Board to transmit copies of this Resolution to the San Francisco Mayor’s Office, Department of Public Health Director Dr. Grant Colfax, and the San Francisco Public Health Officer Dr. Tomás Aragón.
Resolution urging Governor Gavin Newsom, California Department of Health Acting Director Sandra Shewry, and Acting State Health Officer Dr. Erica S. Pan to reconsider the closure of outdoor public playgrounds as part of the December 3, 2020, Regional Stay at Home Order in response to rising rates of COVID-19 infection.

December 15, 2020 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED
Ayes: 11 - Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton and Yee

File No. 201369

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 12/15/2020 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution, not being signed by the Mayor within the time limit as set forth in Section 3.103 of the Charter, or time waived pursuant to Board Rule 2.14.2, became effective without her approval in accordance with the provision of said Section 3.103 of the Charter or Board Rule 2.14.2.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board