



MAYOR REX RICHARDSON

May 29, 2025

The Honorable Mia Bonta
Chair, Assembly Health Committee
1020 N Street, Suite 390
Sacramento, CA 94249-0018

RE: Support for AB 1288 (Addis and Valencia)—Registered Environmental Health Specialists

Dear Assembly Member Bonta,

On behalf of the City of Long Beach (City), the City supports AB 1288, which would extend the time in which local health and environmental health departments may train and employ a local Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) trainee from three to five years.

Certification for the REHS program is currently administered by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). The program ensures that certified REHS' have met adequate education, training and experience requirements and have passed a comprehensive state examination. While working towards certification, individuals may be employed as a REHS trainee by local health and environmental health departments for up to three years. However, limited exam offerings and strict time limitations governing how often a trainee may take the exam have resulted in trainees being reassigned or released, even if they wish to continue to pursue a career as a certified REHS. Extending the timeline to pass the REHS exam will expand opportunities for entry-level employees to continue their careers with local health jurisdictions and environmental health departments.

REHS' play a critical role in safeguarding our community. From unscheduled inspections to investigating complaints, their expertise keeps residents safe and healthy. Additionally, many businesses rely on their timely services to open their doors and ensure public trust. In Long Beach, the high vacancy rate for these positions is causing delays for small and large businesses. The City cannot offer a reliable timeline for businesses, if environmental health and safety inspections take weeks or months to schedule. Additionally, if the process takes too long, there is an increased risk that businesses will chose to open regardless of passing a health inspection, endangering the health and safety of workers and customers.

The City is optimistic that AB 1288 will help address recruitment and retention challenges and strengthen the REHS workforce pipeline. For these reasons, the City supports AB 1288.

Sincerely,

Mayor Rex Richardson
City of Long Beach

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