



Cheryl Davila
Councilmember
District 2

CONSENT CALENDAR
June 16, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmembers Cheryl Davila (Author) and Kate Harrison (Co-Sponsor)
Subject: Supporting the United States and Cuba Collaboration in Fighting COVID-19

RECOMMENDATION

1. Adopt a Resolution supporting the United States and Cuba collaboration in fighting COVID-19; and
2. Send copies of this resolution to United States Senators Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris and United States Congresswoman Barbara Lee.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Cities of Berkeley, California and Palma Soriano, Santiago de Cuba are Sister Cities. Berkeley and Palma Soriano have continued to build upon our connections by fostering relationships between the residents and institutions of our cities, and by working on projects in health care, education, and culture. More than ever, it is important to collaborate to fight COVID-19.

BACKGROUND

The City of Berkeley passed Resolution 67,470-N.S. Calling for an End to the U.S. Economic, Commercial, and Financial Embargo Against Cuba in 2016. The Berkeley-Palma Soriano Sister City Association urges the lifting of the restrictions on access to medical expertise, including the importation of Interferon Alfa 2B Recombinant (IFNrec).

COVID-19 is a pandemic that has negatively impacted the entire world by infecting millions of people, causing many states and countries around the world to issue shelter-in-place orders that have resulted in countless others losing their jobs or otherwise putting their lives on hold, and creating a world of physical distancing to stop the spread of Coronavirus.

The onset of COVID-19 has overwhelmed hospitals, which has led to a lack of necessary supplies, safety precautions, and medical professionals.

Cuba has access to important medical expertise that can aid other countries in the fight against COVID-19, and this is a time that calls for international solidarity and cooperation, as we are all impacted.

Cuba has access to Interferon Alfa 2B Recombinant (IFNrec), which has shown promising results against COVID-19 and may be a crucial component in finding a cure, treatment, or vaccine.

The United States of America currently has placed restrictions on access to Cuban goods and knowledge, which means that IFNrec cannot be imported to the United States in an effort to combat COVID-19.

According to Jorge Hidalgo, director of the Cuban Central Unit for Medical Collaboration, more than 800 Cuban medical personnel have traveled to 18 different countries to provide aid to countries stricken with COVID-19, with more medical missions being dispatched in the coming weeks.

Millions of people are being affected by this virus, and all countries should be working together on this health issue that transcends borders.

Taking all necessary actions to stop the spread of COVID-19 is the responsibility of all individuals and communities, including the City of Berkeley.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Protecting humanity is itself an act of environmental sustainability.

CONTACT PERSON

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ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA,
SUPPORTING UNITED STATES AND CUBA COLLABORATION IN FIGHTING COVID-19

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a pandemic that has negatively impacted the entire world by infecting millions of people, causing many states to issue shelter-in-place orders that have resulted in countless others losing their jobs or otherwise putting their lives on hold, and creating a world of social distancing to stop the spread of coronavirus; and

WHEREAS, the onset of COVID-19 has overwhelmed hospitals, which has led to a lack of necessary supplies, safety precautions, and medical professionals; and

WHEREAS, Cuba has access to important medical expertise that can aid other countries in the fight against COVID-19, and this is a time that calls for international solidarity and cooperation, as we are all impacted; and

WHEREAS, Cuba has access to Interferon Alfa 2B Recombinant (IFNrec), which has shown promising results against COVID-19 and may be a crucial component in finding a cure, treatment, or vaccine; and

WHEREAS, the United States of America currently has placed restrictions on access to Cuban goods and knowledge, which means that IFNrec cannot be imported to the United States in an effort to combat COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, according to Jorge Hidalgo, director of the Cuban Central Unit for Medical Collaboration, more than 800 Cuban medical personnel have traveled to 18 different countries to provide aid to countries stricken with COVID-19, with more medical missions being dispatched in the coming weeks; and

WHEREAS, millions of people are being affected by this virus, and all countries should be working together on this health issue that transcends borders; and

WHEREAS, taking all necessary actions to stop the spread of COVID-19 is the responsibility of all individuals and communities, including the City of Berkeley; and

WHEREAS, on December 26, 2001, Berkeley, California and Palma Soriano, Santiago de Cuba became official Sister-Cities; and

WHEREAS, since the establishment of this sisterhood, Berkeley and Palma Soriano have continued to build upon our connections by fostering relationships between the citizens and institutions of our cities, and by working on projects in health care, education, and culture; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley passed Resolution 67,470-N.S. Calling for an End to the U.S. Economic, Commercial, and Financial Embargo Against Cuba in 2016; and

WHEREAS, the Berkeley-Palma Soriano Sister City Association urges the lifting of the restrictions on access to medical expertise, including the importation of IFNrec; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Berkeley, California supports not only the lifting of restrictions on Interferon Alfa 2B Recombinant from Cuba, but also the medical collaboration between the United States of America and Cuba in the fight against COVID-19. Specifically, the Council of the City of Berkeley calls for:

1. Allowing U.S.-Cuba-Canada medical, clinical and scientific collaboration, including inviting Cuban medical brigades to provide direct medical assistance and/or to provide advice and guidance in treating COVID-19.
2. Incorporating Cuba's Interferon Alfa 2B Recombinant in clinical trials in the U.S., Canada and the WHO, and the granting, by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, of approval for Cuba's Interferon Alfa 2B Recombinant.
3. Ending U.S. economic and travel sanctions against Cuba, including its extraterritorial nature and the attempts to stop all other countries from accepting Cuban medical brigades and assistance, and ending all ongoing measures that prevent Cuba from accessing and importing medical equipment and medicines to confront COVID-19.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be sent to Senator Dianne Feinstein, Senator Kamala Harris, and Representative Barbara Lee.