

Communication from Public

Name: Silica Safety Coalition
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Council File No: 24-0393
Comments for Public Posting: On behalf of the Silica Safety Coalition, please see attached letter in support of the motion for workers' health and safety.

April 30, 2024

Subject: Council Motion on Public Awareness Campaign for Engineered Stone Products – Importance of Safe Stone Fabrication Process

Dear Members of the Neighborhoods and Community Enrichment Committee,

On behalf of the [Silica Safety Coalition](#), a group of stone fabricators, manufacturers, and other members of the stone industry, we write to express our shared support for workplace safety practices in the stone cutting and fabrication industry in Los Angeles. Our members have a long-standing commitment to safety and we would like to share information on the work we have been doing on this issue in Los Angeles County.

To provide you with some context on the stone industry, like the building industry in general—worker safety is of critical importance to the stone industry. The issue at hand is not a product issue, but rather a fabrication process issue that applies to all silica-containing products, including all stone products. Because of this, we must address the root cause of the fabrication process issue: Employers must ensure all necessary safety rules are followed to protect their workers' health and safety. As recently explained by Cal/OSHA, "Silicosis in the Stone Fabrication Industry is Preventable. Exposures to RCS [respirable crystalline silica] and resulting disease and deaths are completely preventable through the use of well-established industrial hygiene controls." Compliance with these well-established industrial hygiene requirements is essential, and, in particular, we strongly support all efforts to completely **eliminate any practice of dry-cutting, dry-grinding, and dry-polishing of any stone product.**

Stone products are safely handled and worked on every day, including in the City of Los Angeles, and silica is present in a wide range of other building products as well. Although most fabrication companies throughout the United States provide safe working conditions and insist on adherence to safety rules and regulations, our group continues to support efforts to ensure that all fabricators adhere to the rules and regulations to protect all stone workers. Specifically, fabrication employers must provide necessary training, air monitoring and adherence to air quality requirements, engineering air handling controls, personal protective equipment (PPE), and medical surveillance in compliance with OSHA regulations.

The Silica Safety Coalition is committed to supporting safe workplace practices for processing stone and supporting access to resources and education about required work practices to safely cut, fabricate and polish all types of stone. We are also available to support the development and distribution of targeted multilingual outreach and education materials and messaging. As the stone industry's education and training arm, the Natural Stone Institute, has many education, training and certification opportunities available to all stone industry fabricators.

The Silica Safety Coalition has been working hand in hand with both the County and the State to serve as a resource for stone fabrication discussions. As you may know, Los Angeles County recently developed a comprehensive report back on addressing potential hazards of fabricating engineered stone—the report back focuses on the following: continued community outreach efforts; continued development of educational resources for both employers and workers; and minimization of the risks associated with working with engineered stone through the implementation of effective safety

measures and compliance with those safety measures. The Silica Safety Coalition supports the County's recommendations and has already shared resources and education materials with Pacoima Beautiful (non-profit tasked with leading community outreach efforts). Further, the Silica Safety Coalition is having ongoing conversations with Pacoima Beautiful regarding assistance with the distribution of educational materials.

The Silica Safety Coalition stands ready to support the City of Los Angeles to ensure all necessary safety rules are being followed to protect the workers' health and safety. By fostering a culture of safety and employer responsibility, workers can be protected while preserving their ability to continue to participate in the stone industry.

Sincerely,

Silica Safety Coalition