



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Ralph S. Northam
Governor

June 14, 2021

VIA EMAIL

Chairwoman Milagro Rodriguez
Virginia Safety and Health Codes Board
Virginia Department of Labor and Industry
600 East Main Street, Suite 207
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Chairwoman Rodriguez:

I am writing to you today about the Final Permanent Standard for the Infectious Disease Prevention of the SARS-CoV-2 Virus that Causes COVID-19. On behalf of all Virginians, I would like to thank you and the Safety and Health Codes Board for your swift action last year to address COVID-19 safety concerns in the workplace. We will never know how many lives were saved by the Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) during the height of the pandemic. As COVID-19 was sweeping through our communities, this standard provided needed guidance to employers and employees on how to maintain their business operations while keeping everyone safe.

With increasing vaccination rates, the continued decline in case counts, and revised guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), we are finally seeing life return to once-dormant sectors of our economy. The Final Permanent Standard (FPS), having replaced the ETS, unfortunately does not evolve with improving conditions across the Commonwealth. It is of utmost importance that the Safety and Health Codes Board take action to address the discrepancies between the FPS, CDC guidance, and the rapidly changing realities of the workplace during this pandemic. I also note that OSHA just released an Emergency Temporary Standard, which should be taken into consideration by the Board. This will be a critical step in supporting Virginia's economy while protecting workers. With Virginia's state of emergency expiring at the end of this month, I request that you convene a meeting of the Virginia Safety and Health Codes Board before June 30, 2021 to address these issues.

Chairwoman Milagro Rodriguez
June 14, 2021
Page 2

As always, the Department of Labor and Industry and the Virginia Department of Health stand ready to assist you in updating this standard. Thank you for your service to the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ralph S. Northam". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ralph S. Northam

cc: Charles L. Stiff, Vice Chairman of Safety and Health Codes Board
C. Ray Davenport, Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Industry
M. Norman Oliver, Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Health