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California State Senate

SENATOR
SCOTT WILK
SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER
TWENTY-FIRST SENATE DISTRICT

COMMITTEES
GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATION
TRANSPORTATION



October 11, 2021

The Honorable Mark Ghaly MD, MPH
Secretary
California Health and Human Services Agency
1600 Ninth Street, Room 460
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Valencia Branch Laboratory

Dear Secretary Ghaly,

I write to ask you about the status of the final report on the Valencia Branch Laboratory conducted by the California Department of Public Health's Laboratory Field Services (LFS).

As you are well aware, a LFS investigation conducted late last year uncovered thousands of inconclusive or erroneous test results coming out of the Valencia lab, which is located in my Senatorial district. Further reporting by CBS 13 Sacramento earlier this year included interviews with a number of whistleblowers who pointed to "contamination, constantly changing protocols, unlicensed and inadequately trained staff as the reason for the high number of invalid and inconclusive results."

Since then, my staff has been in regular communication with senior officials in your agency. These officials claimed that the final investigative report into the whistleblower allegations would be made publicly available by mid-March. It is now almost seven months since then, and in various requests to see the report, we have been told that the report is still "being finalized."

Many of my constituents are employed by PerkinElmer in this laboratory and many more are served by the test results it produces. It is crucial that we receive a transparent and timely accounting of the issues regarding working conditions in the lab and the accuracy of the tests. PerkinElmer was granted a no-bid \$1.4 billion COVID-19 testing contract. While this is indeed an unprecedented pandemic, state contractors and agencies must still be held accountable. Delaying the public release of the report with little to no explanation is unacceptable and does not provide the level of service and transparency Californians deserve.

Please provide us with a concrete date on when the final report will be made publicly available, and the specific reasons as to why it was delayed. If you have any questions about my request, please call my office at 916-651-4021 or email me at Senator.Wilk@senate.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Scott Wilk".

Scott Wilk
Senate Republican Leader

CC: Tomás J. Aragón , M.D., Dr. P.H., California Department of Public Health