

FW: 2-13-2024 City council public comment on item #8.1

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From: Rigoberto Gallardo [REDACTED]
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Good afternoon mayor and city council my name is Rigo Gallardo a field rep for carpenters local 405

I stand before you today to share a journey—a journey of transformation, resilience, and opportunity. It's a story that begins with struggle but is illuminated by the beacon of hope provided by meaningful work and fair labor practices.

Not long ago, I found myself on probation, navigating the tough reality of making ends meet through temporary agency jobs. Every day was a battle against uncertainty and financial instability. But amidst the chaos, an opportunity emerged—an opportunity to work on a residential project at the old Del Monte cannery in San Jose.

From cleaning construction sites to becoming a carpenter apprentice, every nail hammered and every beam set paved the way for a brighter future. Through perseverance and dedication, I graduated from the apprenticeship program and eventually found myself leading worksites, advocating for fairness and justice as a union representative.

The Del Monte cannery project wasn't just about building homes; it was about building lives, including mine. It taught me the value of hard work, the power of community, and the importance of setting standards for fair labor practices.

But as I stand here today, I can't help but wonder—when will we extend these opportunities to the next generation? When will we acknowledge that college isn't the only path to success and provide avenues for those who seek to make a decent living with their hands and hearts?

San Jose boasts of its low-income housing initiatives, yet we fail to address the fundamental issue—the lack of well-paying job opportunities for our residents. Developers cite profit margins as an excuse to bypass labor standards, but at what cost? When will San Jose demand that those who wish to build here invest in the very community they seek to serve?

It's time to set a precedent. It's time to prioritize the well-being of our residents over profit margins. It's time for San Jose to stand firm and say, "If you want to build here, you must invest in our community—with fair wages, apprenticeship programs, and healthcare benefits."

Together, let's create a future where opportunity knows no bounds, where hard work is rewarded, and where every resident can thrive. The journey begins with us, and the time for change is now.



Rigoberto Gallardo

Organizer

Nor Cal Carpenters Union



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