

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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April 22, 2024

The Honorable Shannon Grove
Senate District 12
1021 O Street, Room 7150
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Melissa Hurtado
Senate District 16
1021 O Street, Room 7310
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Vince Fong
Assembly District 32
1021 O Street, Suite 4630
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Tom Lackey
Assembly District 34
1021 O Street, Suite 5340
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Jasmeet Bains
Assembly District 35
1021 O Street, Suite 5730
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Protecting State Budget Allocations for Kern Workforce - SUPPORT

Honorable members of the Kern Legislative Delegation,

On behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors, I am writing to request your support and active engagement to protect state budget allocations that have been awarded to the County for our workforce development efforts.

As the state continues to grapple with a record budget deficit, we are concerned that the \$11.2 million Displaced Oil and Gas Workers grant funding Kern was awarded in February could be in jeopardy if the state's budget deficit worsens. Funding for this grant was requested by Governor Newsom and provided by the state Legislature. The program is administered by the Employment Development Department (EDD) and the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency with funds coming from the state general fund. Our Employers' Training Resource (ETR) Department is relying on these funds to help prepare and guide displaced workers impacted by California's rapid transition away from oil and gas into high-quality careers that offer economic stability and build upon their existing qualifications and skillsets.

Similarly, we are concerned that the \$900,000 grant funding Kern was awarded earlier this year through the Farmworker Advancement Program could also be in jeopardy. Funding for this grant was allocated through the EDD via the Governor's discretionary Workforce Innovation and Opportunity

Act (WIOA) funds. This program will provide participants with job skills training, on-the-job training, work-based learning, access to training roles in adjacent sectors such as agriculture and forestry, and offer a new strategic approach to prepare farmworkers for in-demand employment outside of the agriculture sector.

As Kern's economy continues to be strained by the state's energy transition and the ongoing threat of drought and fallowed farmland, these grant programs are imperative to maintaining the livelihoods and economic wellbeing of some of our most vulnerable workers. The added pressure of a strained state budget must not be allowed to circumvent these vital resources that will be needed now more than ever. For these reasons, we are asking our delegates to remain vigilant throughout the state's budget process, from the May Revise to final adoption, to assure that our recent grant allocations are protected and our ETR Department has the resources it needs to provide ongoing services.

If you have any questions, please reach out to our Chief Workforce Development Officer, Aaron Ellis, at: aarone@kerncounty.com or (661)336-6957 at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



David Couch, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange