

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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May 13, 2024

The Honorable Caroline Menjivar
Chair, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 3 on Health & Human Services
1021 O Street, Suite 6720
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Akilah Weber, M.D.
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1 on Health
1021 O Street, Suite 4130
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Reject Governor's Proposal to Eliminate \$300 Million Future of Public Health (FoPH)

Dear Senator Menjivar and Assembly Member Weber:

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to strongly oppose the Governor's May Revision budget proposal to eliminate the entire \$300 million ongoing General Fund Future of Public Health (FoPH) investment, including \$200 million dedicated to local health department workforce and infrastructure. We also express opposition to the elimination of \$52.5 million in FoPH funds in the current fiscal year.

Our Kern County Public Health Department serves as the first line of defense against all public health threats in our community. To carry out this key responsibility, we rely on a highly skilled and specialized workforce. The public health workforce has faced significant challenges over the past several years responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, including burnout and harassment by members of the public.

FoPH provides our Public Health Department with ongoing funding to rebuild our workforce and infrastructure. The proposed cuts would result in the loss of \$5.4 million annually and directly impact roughly 35 positions in our workforce.

These investments represent one of the very few initiatives dedicated to strengthening the governmental public health workforce and infrastructure of our state, and we are dismayed by the

Administration's proposal to eliminate these vital resources. Cutting this vital funding now will exacerbate the inequities of decades-long resource shortages that have contributed to the poor health outcomes of our residents and residents throughout the Valley.

As we continue to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, our country and state has experienced the tragic impacts of understaffed and under-resourced local public health departments. California must continue to support the governmental public health workforce and ensure robust and capable public health departments.

It is for these reasons that the Kern County Board of Supervisors respectfully requests that your committee reject the Administration's proposed elimination of public health funding and maintain the ongoing \$300 million FoPH investment.

Respectfully,



David Couch, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Committee
Honorable Members, Assembly Budget Committee
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
Scott Ogus, Deputy Staff Director, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Committee
Elissa Wynne, Staff Director, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Committee
Marjorie Swartz, Principal Consultant, Office of Senate President pro Tempore
Christian Griffith, Chief Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee
Rosielyn Pulmano, Consultant, Office of Assembly Speaker
Anthony Archie, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus
Kirk Feely, Fiscal Director, Senate Republican Caucus
Eric Dietz, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus
Joe Shinstock, Fiscal Director, Assembly Republican Caucus
Joe Stephenshaw, Director, Department of Finance
Mark Ghaly, Secretary, Health & Human Services Agency
Tomás Aragón, Director & State Public Health Officer, Department of Public Health
County Health Executives Association of California
California State Association of Counties
Kern County Public Health Department
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange