

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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July 30, 2024

The Honorable Alex Padilla
United States Senate
Hart Senate Office Building
500 Constitution Ave NE, Room 331
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Laphonza Butler
United States Senate
Hart Senate Office Building
500 Constitution Ave NE, Room 112
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Cosponsor Request – S. 4673 Special District Grant Accessibility Act

Dear Senator Padilla and Senator Butler,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our strong support for S. 4673 and respectfully request that you cosponsor this important legislation titled the *Special District Grant Accessibility Act*.

This bipartisan bill would establish a formal definition of special district in federal law, as well as direct the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to issue guidance to federal agencies requiring special districts to be recognized as local governments for the purpose of federal financial assistance determinations.

Special districts are local governments created by the people of a community to deliver specialized services essential to their health, safety, economy, and well-being. California's special districts provide nearly all of our state's 39 million residents with at least one essential service, including fire protection, drinking water and wastewater, parks and open space, healthcare, transit, resource conservation, mosquito abatement, ports and harbors, airports, cemeteries, libraries, and more.

Despite the prevalence of more than 35,000 special districts throughout the United States, federal law lacks a consistent definition for these special purpose units of local government. As a result, some special districts and the communities they serve face challenges in accessing federal funding opportunities and are commonly omitted from the definition of eligible units of local government in legislative proposals that authorize federal programs and funding. Moreover, special districts lack official population figures and are therefore not recognized by the U.S. Census Bureau as "geographic units of government." Consequently, special districts are sometimes unable to gain access to certain formula-driven grants and resources.

Sponsored by Senators Kyrsten Sinema (I-AZ) and John Cornyn (R-TX), the *Special District Grant Accessibility Act* represents a long-overdue, bipartisan effort designed to ensure special districts and their

communities have equitable access to federal resources. Again, the Kern County Board of Supervisors urges you to cosponsor this important legislation and we look forward to working with you to ensure its passage in the Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Couch', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Couch, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
National Association of Counties
California Special Districts Association
Carpi & Clay