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KATHLEEN KRAUSE
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March 31, 2025

The Honorable Vince Fong
U.S. House of Representatives
243 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Representative Fong,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express my strong support for Kern County Hospital Authority (Kern Medical) in their congressional spending proposal to fund the demolition of F-Ward and improvement of existing parking areas to create an ADA-compliant parking lot. As an advocate for public health and equitable access to care, Kern County firmly believes that this investment will provide significant benefits to our community and enhance the quality of services provided at Kern Medical.

F Ward, constructed prior to the 1952 Bakersfield Earthquake, is a deteriorated, unoccupied structure made of unreinforced masonry. Due to the absence of original building plans, structural deficiencies, and the presence of asbestos and lead-based paint, it is not retrofit-capable and poses ongoing safety and liability concerns. Vacant for over a decade, the facility continues to require maintenance and security. This demolition would allow for the reimagining of the space, supporting future expansions and upgrades that are essential for accommodating growing healthcare needs in our community.

Additionally, the proposed ADA-compliant parking lot is crucial in ensuring accessibility for individuals with disabilities, seniors, and others with mobility challenges. By paving a parking lot that meets ADA standards, we will remove significant barriers to accessing the hospital, allowing all patients to receive the care they need without undue hardship. Access to healthcare should never be hindered by physical obstacles, and this upgrade will directly contribute to a more inclusive and patient-friendly environment at Kern Medical.

Kern Medical has long been a cornerstone of healthcare in our community, and these improvements will help ensure that it continues to meet the evolving needs of residents. The demolition of F-Ward and the creation of an ADA-compliant parking lot are essential steps in improving both patient experience and facility functionality. These upgrades align with our shared goals of accessibility and the long-term sustainability of quality healthcare services in Kern County.

The County of Kern strongly urges you to support this proposal and advocate for the funding required to make these important changes. These enhancements will undoubtedly benefit our community for years to come, ensuring that every patient can access care safely, comfortably, and without barriers.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this critical funding request. Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you require further information or would like to discuss this proposal in more detail.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'LP' or 'L Perez', with a stylized, cursive style.

Leticia Perez, Chair
Kern County Board of Supervisors