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KATHLEEN KRAUSE
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March 19, 2025

The Honorable David Valadao
United States House of Representatives
2465 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: FY 2026 Community Project Funding Request for the Kern Regional Public Safety Communications Network

Dear Congressman Valadao,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to urge your support for the Kern Regional Public Safety Communications Network through the FY 2026 federal appropriations process.

Several years ago, the County performed a robust analysis of our communications system and determined that it is now at the point where replacement parts are difficult if not impossible to obtain and most of the equipment has reached the "end of support" dates. Delays in replacing critical parts are eroding the overall effectiveness and public safety responsiveness of our personnel, particularly in our most rural and isolated communities. As an example, some jurisdictions are currently procuring replacement parts from third party internet auction sites to maintain their existing systems. All existing microwave network equipment that links radio sites to each other, to dispatch, and to remote Kern County Fire and Sheriff substations have reached or will soon reach their end of life and need to be replaced.

As a result, the County has initiated a capital improvement project that will replace our old analog radio dispatch system with a state-of-the-art digital system. The new network will allow integrated communications between law enforcement, fire suppression, and emergency response agencies across **all** sectors of government (city, county, state, and federal agencies).

The total cost of the project is estimated at \$177 million. The County has already secured \$130 million in financing and other dedicated funding sources. Kern is seeking **\$1.5 million** in Community Project Funding to assist with the acquisition of radio equipment that will address the immediate needs of our first responders during Phase I of the project. We believe this investment from the federal government will significantly improve radio system coverage, enhance interoperability, and improve reliability for both subscriber and infrastructure devices for our public safety personnel.

We greatly appreciate your attention and urge your strong consideration for our funding request in FY 2026.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Leticia Perez", written over a white background.

Leticia Perez, Chair
Kern County Board of Supervisors