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March 27, 2025

The Honorable Catherine Blakespear
Chair, Senate Environmental Quality Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 7720
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 496 (Hurtado), Advanced Clean Fleets appeals process — SUPPORT

Dear Senator Blakespear,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors, in lockstep with the California State Association of Counties, to express our strong support for SB 496 (Hurtado), which would create much-needed flexibility for compliance with the state's zero emission vehicle (ZEV) fleet regulations.

Counties are working diligently to upgrade fleet vehicles while ensuring that they continue to provide the many critical services residents rely on for their most essential daily needs. The California Air Resources Board's (CARB) Advanced Clean Fleets (ACF) rule sets ambitious compliance deadlines for fleets to transition to ZEVs, requiring access to adequate utility infrastructure, assurance of vehicle availability and technology to support a wide spectrum of highly specialized services that counties provide. While the ACF allows exemption requests when fleets cannot meet compliance timetables, the rule does not provide clarity on how exemptions are evaluated, nor does it provide an appeals process for denials by CARB.

SB 496 would aid counties by providing a clear process for appealing denied exemptions, giving the regulated community recourse when vehicles or infrastructure aren't available in the expected compliance timeline. Additionally, SB 496 would update the emergency vehicle exemption, allowing vehicles that are used to respond to and support critical operations during emergencies and disasters to continue to protect our communities. SB 496 also modifies the daily usage exemption to allow more flexibility for low-usage vehicles that might not be cost-effective for replacement under the rule. Finally, SB 496 removes requirements to purchase ZEVs before the infrastructure is available to use them, preserving precious budget flexibility for local governments at a time when every dollar counts.

SB 496 will improve the ACF so that county governments can implement the requirements without compromising the health and safety of California residents. For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors supports SB 496 and encourages you to vote YES when it comes before your Committee.

Sincerely,

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

Leticia Perez, Chair
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Environmental Quality Committee
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
California State Association of Counties
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange