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March 21, 2023

The Honorable Benjamin Allen
Chair, Senate Committee on Environmental Quality
1021 O Street, Suite 3230
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 15 (Grove), Oil import data – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Allen,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our support for SB 15 (Grove), which would help bring transparency to the amount of greenhouse gas emissions associated with the import of foreign crude oil into California and divulge the human rights records and environmental standards of the foreign nations that supply our refineries.

As mandates from Sacramento continue to push a renewable energy agenda, it is important for the Legislature to recognize the role that gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel have played in putting our economy on track to become the 4th largest in the world. California has the most registered motor vehicles and the most vehicle miles traveled of any state. Its travel to work times are among the nation's longest. California also consumes more than one-seventh of the jet fuel used in the nation¹. Although it has become a popular political practice to admonish the petroleum industry, the fact remains that average Californians will continue to rely on combustion engines and the products the petroleum industry produces to travel to their jobs so they can earn a living, put food on the table, pay their taxes, and carry on with their daily lives.

According to a recent report in the *New York Times*², one in every nine tanks of gas, diesel or jet fuel pumped in California comes from the Amazon rainforest. Ecuador has long exported oil to California, in part because the two regions produce similar types of relatively heavy oil and the refineries we have were built to process certain viscosities.

In 2021, 29% of the oil supplying California's refineries came from in state, 15% came from Alaska, and 56% came from abroad. Of the imported crude, more came from Ecuador than anywhere else, with Saudi Arabia a close second. It is hypocritical and unethical, therefore, for the State of California to continue promulgating policies and regulations meant to drive the local oil and gas industry out of existence in the name of addressing climate change. On the contrary, the State's climate policies have come at the expense of indigenous people, aided in the destruction of the rainforest, and helped finance foreign governments that have an atrocious human rights track record.

California's energy needs and consumption are not going to change overnight. We need an all-of-the-above energy strategy to keep California moving forward. The nation is grappling with historic inflation; less affluent and working-class families simply cannot afford the high cost of electric vehicles given current market conditions. California-produced oil is the only crude in the world compliant with the state's climate regulations. Our oil producers must follow the state's greenhouse gas reduction programs

¹ <https://www.eia.gov/state/print.php?sid=CA>

² <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/25/us/oil-amazon-rainforest-california.html>

and account for all emissions, but oil imports are entirely exempt from these regulations. Foreign countries don't pay local taxes that fund police, fire, roads and schools, nor do they support local projects like affordable housing.

Our hope is that this bill will help educate and inform the Legislature about the consequences its policy choices are having on indigenous people, the rainforest, and the global community at large. Our hope is that this bill will help shed light on the amount of money we export to nations with appalling human rights records such as Saudi Arabia.

For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors respectfully encourages you to vote **YES** on **SB 15**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeff Flores", with a stylized, flowing script.

Jeff Flores, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

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