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**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF VENTURA**

GOVERNMENT CENTER, HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
800 SOUTH VICTORIA AVENUE, VENTURA, CALIFORNIA 93009

December 8, 2020

**Governor Gavin Newsom
Via Email**

Re: Ventura County – Request for Central Coast Regional Consideration

Dear Governor Newsom,

On behalf of the Ventura County Board of Supervisors, I want to once again thank you, Dr. Ghaly, and Dr. Erica Pan for your leadership and accessibility during this unprecedented global pandemic. In further support of the state's regional approach to the recent stay at home orders we would like to respectfully request that Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo counties (Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Region 1A) be allowed to exit the regional stay at home order as a Central Coast Region after three weeks, if the ICU capacity in our three counties exceeds 15%.

The County of Ventura and our Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counterparts were placed into the Southern California region. The Southern California region designated by the state represents nearly 60% of the population of the state of California. The remaining approximately 40% of the state is divided into four regions.

We believe that the state's regional approach to COVID-19 mitigation efforts can be further improved by creating a central coast region comprised of Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties which will support better outcomes with reduced health, education and economic impacts.

The high prevalence of disease in the large southern California counties could prevent the three central coast counties from exiting the RSHO under the current Southern California Region approach, especially as the testing rates in the three central coast counties are higher than most Southern California counties and the positivity rates are lower according to the last data reported on the Blueprint for a Safer Economy published by the state. Additionally, the collective ICU capacity of the central coast counties currently exceeds 15%.

As you stated in your press conference of December 3, 2020, we must all work aggressively to blunt the surge of disease and bend the curve to protect the most vulnerable among us as well as our critical hospital ICU capacity. We too recognize this need and the gravity and importance of this moment. The County of Ventura and our Central Coast regional partners, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties, have consistently modeled best practices in our strategies to collectively mitigate the spread of COVID-19, protect our shared constituencies and maintain critical hospital capacity. Being kept in the RSAHO any longer than necessary will cause preventable educational and economic hardships to our communities. It is also highly problematic to have us join the larger region when our communities have diligently complied with state and local health orders since the beginning of the pandemic.

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We are therefore writing you today to urge your support of the Public Health Directors' unified request for Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo County to exit the Regional Stay At Home Order as a Central Coast Region, after three weeks, if the ICU capacity in our three counties as a region exceeds 15%.

The attached letter, signed by each county's Public Health Director and Health Officer, provides multiple examples of our history of partnership to prevent disease, protect health and promote health equity. In addition to that referenced, at the onset of COVID-19, our counties engaged in joint actions to serve our central coast constituencies through shared testing and lab resources, as well as alternative care site planning and mass communication. We are best positioned to understand the critical needs within our region and have existing partnerships to promote the health and economic well-being of our communities. This partnership, evolved over many decades, recognizes the symbiotic nature of our counties due to travel and the proximity of jobs to housing throughout the central coast, and is fostered daily in government, health care, business and academic settings. As noted in the in the Public Health Directors' letter, working in partnership as a Central Coast Region, we can adeptly reset the case rate, decrease testing positivity and continue to improve the ICU capacity which currently stands at greater than 15% among the hospitals in our three counties. As of December 4, the Central Coast Region's ICU capacity is 25.6%.

We urge you to approve the request to exit the Regional Stay at Home Order if our three counties as a region exceed 15% ICU capacity after three weeks so that we can continue to aggressively address COVID-19 impacts and avoid further and preventable economic and educational hardships. Allowing this change will not have a significant impact on the ICU availability rates of the remaining counties in the Southern California Region, given their much larger size and populations; yet it will have a tremendous impact on the Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo communities. This change would neither affect our continued commitment to assist other counties in the Southern California region or elsewhere during this critical time.

Thank you again for your leadership and for your consideration of this request. We will continue to work aggressively on mitigating the pandemic and its impact on our communities with our partners in the central coast and the state.

Sincerely,



Kelly Long,
Chair, Board of Supervisors
County of Ventura

Encl: Letter from Public Health Officials

Cc:

Ventura County Board of Supervisors
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors
California State Senator Henry Stern
California State Senator Monique Limón
California State Assemblymember Steve Bennett
California State Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin
California State Assemblymember Suzette Valladares
California State Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel