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May 5, 2016

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Karen L. Smith, MD, MPH, Director and State Public Health Officer
California Department of Public Health
1615 Capitol Avenue, Suite 73.720
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RE: AB 2722 (Burke): Transformative Climate Communities Program - Support

Dear Dr. Smith:

The California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) voted at the CCLHO Semiannual Business meeting on April 13, 2016 to take a Support recommendation on AB 2722 (Burke), a bill that would create the Transformative Climate Communities Program through the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) and require the SGC to award competitive grants to fund the development and implementation of neighborhood-level transformative climate community plans that include multiple, coordinated greenhouse gas emissions reduction projects. These projects would provide local economic, environmental, and health benefits that are directly connected to those disadvantaged communities most impacted by pollution and vulnerable to climate change.

The intent of AB 2722 is to fund projects that provide economic, environmental and health benefits to those communities most affected by pollution and the effects of climate change. CCLHO strongly supports this program's intent to mitigate the negative effects of climate change in those communities that are most vulnerable. The Transformative Climate Communities Program has the potential to empower communities to develop climate strategies that integrate energy, transportation, active transportation, housing, urban greening, land use, water use efficiency, waste reduction, and other areas, while also increasing job training, economic, health, and environmental benefits.

CCLHO recommends highlighting in AB 2722 the role that public health jurisdictions often play in improving the public's health by collaborating with partners in a variety of different sectors. In this context, CCLHO recommends adding local public health jurisdictions as one type of eligible local agency under section 75241(a)(7). CCLHO also expresses concern that the methodology to be used to identify disadvantaged communities is not specified, and would be willing to review that methodology at the point that regulations are being drafted.

As you are aware, CCLHO was established in statute in 1947 to advise the California Department of Health Services (now the California Department of Public Health), other departments, boards, and commissions, as well as officials of federal, state and local agencies, the Legislature and other organizations on all matters affecting health. CCLHO membership consists of all legally appointed physician health officers in California's 61 city and county jurisdictions.

Karen L. Smith, MD, MPH
May 5, 2016
Page 2

This position of support for creating the Transformative Climate Communities Program is consistent with CCLHO's strategic priority to address population-based issues affecting the health of all Californians, particularly issues affecting specific vulnerable populations.

If you have any questions, please contact me at jberreman@ci.berkeley.ca.us or at 510-981-5301. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Original signed by Dr. Janet Berreman

Janet Berreman, MD, MPH
President, California Conference of Local Health Officers