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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

February 24, 2020

The Honorable Salud Carbajal
 U.S. House of Representatives
 1431 Longworth House Office Building
 Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Carbajal:

I am writing on behalf of the County of Santa Barbara in support of the highest level of funding for housing and community development programs in the *FY 2021 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations* bill.

Thank you for your support for housing and community development programs in the recently enacted FY 2020 Consolidated Appropriation Act. Santa Barbara County urges your continued support for the highest level of funding possible for these Department of Housing and Urban Development programs in FY 2021:

- Community Development Block Grants
- The HOME Investment Partnerships Act program
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance
- Elderly Housing
- Housing for People With AIDS
- The National Housing Trust Fund

The Administration has proposed elimination of the HOME program and Community Development Block Grants in FY 2021. The County's funding from these two programs has already dropped 43 percent since 2010. Continued reductions negatively impact the community through the lack of resources to address County needs in the areas of capital infrastructure, public service, microeconomic development and affordable housing. The availability of housing and community services supports stronger communities, improved outcomes in schools, and work-ready community residents. For every \$1 in CDBG and HOME funded expended, the community leverages over \$4 from other sources.

The County of Santa Barbara also works in partnership with cities and community organizations to address homelessness and federal homeless assistance grants are critical to these efforts. Last year, agencies in the County received \$2 million through the Continuum of Care program to fight homelessness and provide critically needed support to local programs serving individuals and families.

Each year more than 6,300 people in Santa Barbara County experience homelessness; on any given night, nearly 2,000 people are homeless. Of the people who are homeless, 23 percent or as many as 450 people are chronically homeless. Santa Barbara County's chronically homeless population is composed of primarily single adults who have either been: 1) continuously homeless for a year or more or have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years, 2) have a disabling condition and 3) have been sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g. living on the streets) or in an emergency shelter during that time. Many of these individuals have serious mental illnesses; two-thirds of all people with serious mental illness have been homeless or have been at risk of being homeless at some point in their lives.

Please work with your colleagues on the Subcommittee to ensure that housing and community development programs critical to local governments are funded at the highest possible level in the *FY 2021 THUD* bill.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don Gilchrest". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "D" and "G".

Don Gilchrest
Washington Representative

DWG: awg