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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

September 11, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 182 (Jackson) Local government: planning and zoning: wildfires. – Request for Signature**

Dear Governor Newsom:

I am writing on behalf of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors to respectfully request your signature on SB 182 (Jackson), which would require new developments in very high fire severity zones to meet specific wildfire resiliency risk reduction standards and planning requirements. This bill utilizes existing planning policies to improve the local land use process in a way that can decrease fire risk to our communities.

Specifically, SB 182 prohibits local governments from approving development agreements, permits, or maps for housing developments unless the project is in compliance with the wildfire risk reduction standards as outlined in the bill. SB 182 also requires increased wildfire risk mitigation planning by local governments through updated local safety and land use elements of that jurisdiction's general plan. Additionally, in order to reduce development pressures in the Very High Fire Risk Area (VHFRA) through the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process, SB 182 requires a lower proportion of state housing allocation to jurisdictions that meet specified conditions. Fire threats will remain a significant issue facing residents and communities across California. We appreciate the balanced approach this bill takes towards reducing those threats and maintaining local land use authority.

In line with CSAC's letter dated September 11, 2020, the County supports efforts to improve emergency alerts and warning, defensible space, and forest management. This bill strikes the balance of improving public policy while maintaining local control of community development and land use decisions. We are also encouraged by provisions that require evaluation and consideration of available areas outside of very high fire severity zones into the regional housing needs allocation process. We believe these provisions are necessary to help achieve the outcomes of the bill.

In 2017 and 2018, Santa Barbara County suffered devastating loss due to the Thomas Fire, which was the largest wildfire in California history at the time. After weeks of wildfires, the Santa Barbara County continued to suffer devastating mudslides, which created tremendous loss resulting in widespread debris flows which

resulted in multiple fatalities. It is critical for the County to use systems that are already in place to incorporate better information in our local planning process.

The Board of Supervisors adopted a 2020 Legislative Platform that includes a Community Sustainability and Environmental Protection Legislative Principle, which specifically states that the County will encourage actions to address, prevent and respond to disasters, as well as the Inter-Agency Collaboration Principle, which states that the County shall support the advocacy efforts of CSAC and collaborate with other entities on mutually beneficial issues.

For these reasons, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors respectfully requests your signature on SB 182. If you have questions about the Board's position, please contact the County's Legislative Coordinator, Nancy Anderson at 805-568-3403 or [NAnderson@countyofsb.org](mailto:NAnderson@countyofsb.org).

Sincerely,



Cliff Berg

*Governmental Advocates, Inc.*

cc: Ronda Paschal, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom  
The Honorable Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson, Author  
The Honorable Assemblymember Monique Limon, 37<sup>th</sup> Assembly District  
The Honorable Assemblymember Jordan Cunningham, 35<sup>th</sup> Assembly District  
Members, County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors  
Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer  
Nancy Anderson, Legislative Coordinator, County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors