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**COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA****BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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October 16, 2021

The Honorable Alex Padilla
 United States Senate
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Padilla:

I am writing on behalf of the County of Santa Barbara in support of the Build Back Better plan. As Congress takes the next steps to draft the provisions for inclusion in the FY 2022 Budget Reconciliation package, the County requests your continued support for mitigation of climate change and supporting the role of local governments in the economic recovery.

The budget reconciliation provisions that have been drafted by House Committees to prioritize climate change mitigation are essential and should be included in the final version of the bill. This includes provisions for clean electricity generation and storage, transportation electrification, methane emissions reduction through plugging orphan wells, climate resilience to protect communities and transportation infrastructure, clean building incentives, and clean energy incentives. Santa Barbara County has faced unprecedented extreme weather in the past decade, including prolonged drought, extreme and intense wildfires, a year-round fire season, and a deadly debris flow preceded by a torrential storm burst. These direct impacts lend an urgency to the County's support for aggressive climate change mitigation on the federal level.

The County also appreciates and supports the efforts to include new investment in public health, affordable housing, workforce development, and community development. Financial resources for the development and preservation of affordable housing and funding to house chronically homeless individuals would allow more people in need to participate in those programs. Programs like HOME Investment Partnerships and Community Development Block Grants have proven track records for meeting these needs. In the same way, investments in health care expansion and Federally Qualified Health Clinics will expand the federal safety net that is implemented at the local level. Assistance for these local government responsibilities are investments in transforming the economy.

The County also supports enactment of H.R. 3684, the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*, which is advancing in tandem with the Build Back Better plan. Bold funding initiatives are needed

now more than ever to invest in infrastructure, transform the economy, and speed the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The provisions in the legislation to invest in transportation, electric vehicle infrastructure, water projects and watershed protection, and provide \$65 billion for broadband will improve and support the County's ability to provide critical services and meet the needs of our community.

Thank you for your continued leadership on these critical issues. As the Build Back Better reconciliation legislation is drafted, please continue to prioritize measures to mitigate climate change and support the role of local governments in the economic recovery.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don Gilchrest". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Don Gilchrest
Washington Representative

DWG: awg