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June 10, 2019

Karen L. Smith, MD, MPH
Director and State Public Health Officer
California Department of Public Health
1615 Capitol Avenue
PO Box 997377, MS 0500
Sacramento, California 95899-7377

Re: SCA 1 (Allen): Public housing projects

Dear Dr. Smith:

The California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) voted at the CCLHO Board meeting on June 6, 2019 to take a Support recommendation on SCA 1 (Allen), a bill that under the California Constitution prohibits the development, construction, or acquisition of a low-rent housing project, as defined, in any manner by any state public body until a majority of the qualified electors of the city, town, or county in which the development, construction, or acquisition of the low-rent housing project is proposed approve the project by voting in favor at an election, as specified. This measure would repeal these provisions.

California has an estimated twenty-two affordable and available rental homes for every one hundred extremely low-income households. A majority of renters spends more than thirty percent of their income on housing, and nearly one-third spend more than half of their income just for a place to live. Article 34 stands as an additional, anachronistic and expensive Constitutional barrier that subjects local governments to a web of regulations and costly elections that end up driving up the price of building publicly financed affordable housing. SCA 1 asks voters to eliminate an obstacle, enshrined in our Constitution, which currently undermines the ability of their elected leadership to address California's acute housing and homelessness challenges. For these reasons, CCLHO recommends a Support position on SCA 1.

CCLHO was established in statute in 1947 to advise the California Department of Health Services (now California Department of Public Health), other departments, boards, commissions, and 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.

Should you have any questions, please contact me by email at roidham@placer.ca.gov or by phone at (530) 745-3121. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Oldham, MD, MSHA
President, California Conference of Local Health Officers