A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

Board of Supervisors

1195 Third St.
Suite 310
Napa, CA 94559
www.countyofnapa.org

Main: (707) 253-4421
Fax: (707) 253-4176

Belia Ramos
Chair

June 30, 2017

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 240 (Dodd) – REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE: Napa County; Farmworker Housing; County Service Area (CSA) No. 4 Assessments

Dear Governor Brown:

The Napa County Board of Supervisors unanimously and respectfully requests that you sign into law Senate Bill (SB) 240, that would increase the annual benefit assessment cap levied on Napa vineyard owners that helps fund Napa County's three farmworker housing centers.

SB 240 increases the cap of CSA No. 4 assessment on growers from $10 to $15 per planted vineyard acre. Napa County's wine industry stakeholders endorse the measure. Napa County has worked hard with vineyard and winery owners and their respective industry associations to provide affordable housing for farmworkers, the backbone of the industry. The passage of SB 240 is a priority item in Napa County's 2017 State Legislative & Policy Platform.

On September 24, 2001, Governor Gray Davis signed AB 1550 (Wiggins) into law, creating CSA No. 4 in Napa County. AB 1550 authorized the Board of Supervisors to impose annual assessments for five years, with the option of renewing the assessments, subject to a Proposition 218 election every five years thereafter. The law set the assessment cap at $10 per planted vineyard acre. The funds are used for the sole purpose of acquiring, constructing, leasing, and maintaining farmworker housing.

Since 2001, inflation has naturally increased Napa County's costs of operating the three farmworker housing centers. Over the same period, CSA No. 4 revenue has virtually remained the same. County staff has worked diligently over the intervening years to cut costs and find savings wherever possible. We are now at a point where such cost cuttings and savings can no longer sustain the program. The assessment cap must be increased.

Napa's farmworker housing program is unique and deserving of funding. The program is a partnership with the County, farmworkers, industry stakeholders, and the local community. We believe the program, which serves mostly single, male migrant workers, is the only such farmworker housing program that exists through sustained support from the business community.

Our farmworker housing centers are highly efficient, providing three meals and a bed night for a total expense of $23 per day. The increased occupancy provides additional income from rent, yet it is still not enough to cover the expenses. The last fiscal year, the NCHA relied heavily on County reserves. This action is unsustainable. Keeping the centers alive will require a dramatic change in the operating schedule if increased revenue cannot be generated.

For these reasons, the Board unanimously and respectfully requests that you sign SB 240 into law so we can continue providing quality affordable housing and meals for our farming workforce.

In closing, the Board deeply appreciates your leadership on housing issues, and we look forward to working with you and the Legislature to address the needs of all Californians.

Sincerely,

Belia Ramos
Chair, Napa County Board of Supervisors

cc: Senator Bill Dodd
Assembly Member Cecilia Agiar-Curry
Napa County Board of Supervisors
Paul Yoder and Karen Lange, SYA
Minh Tran, Interim Napa County Executive Officer
Rural County Representatives f California
California State Association of Counties