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**BOARD OF
SUPERVISORS**

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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

May 22, 2018

The Honorable Holly Mitchell
Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
State Capitol, Room 5019
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Philip Ting
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
State Capitol, Room 6026
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for Budget Item 9210 – County Property Tax Backfill and Request for TOT

Dear Senator Mitchell and Assemblymember Ting:

On behalf of the County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors, I write in support of the revised allocation to local governments for property tax backfill provided in Budget Item 9210. The May Revise contains property tax backfill for Santa Barbara County and other Southern California Counties which were affected by the Thomas Fire.

We respectfully request that additional opportunities for county backfill – including transient occupancy tax - be considered as part of the final budget package. Specifically, the County would like to respectfully request a backfill of \$2.58 million of lost Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) revenues this fiscal year and next as a result of the closure of two hotel properties in the Santa Barbara County. The two hotel properties account for 62% of the TOT revenue to the County. In other events across the State, emergency workers coming into the area for disaster response fill rooms and make up lost tourist dollars. This is not the case with these properties, which were damaged and closed as a result of the disaster. Hotels in nearby cities appear to have experienced higher occupancies, but those related tax dollars did not benefit Santa Barbara County government, which is responsible for most of the disaster costs and recovery activities.

As you know, Santa Barbara County has suffered devastating losses that resulted in hundreds of millions of dollars in property damage, disrupting thousands of lives, businesses and government services due to the Thomas Fire, which was the largest wildfire in California in history. After weeks of wildfires, the Santa Barbara County continued to suffer devastating mudslides, which created tremendous loss and resulted in infrastructure damage, thousands of cubic yards of debris, property loss and multiple fatalities. The proposed allocation will be critical to ensure that the County can deliver the services anticipated and expected by their communities, both as local program offerings and also on behalf of the State.

We appreciate you working with our County on the ongoing challenges facing local government, private businesses and homeowners in rebuilding. We recognize that the State is aware that the ongoing effects of the Thomas Fire as well as the January mud and debris flow are not over. The situation remains a potential threat for further incomprehensible damage.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and all of your work on helping our community.

Sincerely,



Cliff Berg
Governmental Advocates, Inc.

cc: Diane Cummings, Special Assistant to Governor Edmond G. Brown Jr.
Members, Assembly Budget Committee
Christian Griffith, Chief Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee
Susan Chan, Consultant, Assembly Sub Committee #3 on Resources and Transportation
Members, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
Joe Stephenshaw, Chief Consultant, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
Joanne Roy, Consultant, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
Assemblymember Monique Limon, 37th Assembly District
Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson, 13th Senate District
Assemblymember Jordan Cunningham, 35th Assembly District
Members, County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors
Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer
Dennis Bozanich, Legislative Coordinator, County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors