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## California State Senate

SENATOR  
SCOTT WILK

TWENTY-FIRST SENATE DISTRICT



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May 20, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California  
1303 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, California 95814

### **RE: Additional Variance for Northern Los Angeles County Communities for a COVID-19 Regional Recovery Plan**

Dear Governor Newsom:

We respectfully request that you provide additional variance for northern Los Angeles County communities that allows for the creation of a Regional Recovery Plan to permit this region to move to the next stage of your Resilience Roadmap and reopen businesses ahead of the rest of Los Angeles County. We represent the cities of Santa Clarita, Lancaster, and Palmdale, all of which have all requested that they be allowed to develop their own regional reopening plan, instead of following the county's stay at home order.

As you are aware, these northern communities are, like many areas of California, geographically larger, more rural, and separated from the other more urban areas of Los Angeles County. These local differences are similar to the differences between counties throughout the state. In fact, the 88 cities in the county range in density from less than 1,000 citizens per square mile to more than 40,000 citizens per square mile. The combined population of this northern region is greater than 74% of the 58 counties, yet they do not share the same authority for variance that counties were authorized with.

In appreciation of California's geographic diversity, you have provided counties with additional authority to move ahead of the state as long as their individual plans use criteria that ensures protection of public health. This action also acknowledges the distinction in the transmission of COVID-19 between rural, urban and suburban areas.

As of May 19, the total COVID-19 cases in the three cities of the northern region reached 1,668, which is only 4.2% of the county total of 39,573. Conversely, the City of Los Angeles alone hosts nearly 50% of the county's reported cases, underscoring that less dense areas of the county also have lower degrees of transmission.

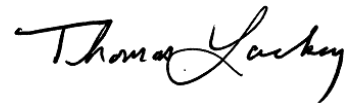
According to Wallethub, the city of Santa Clarita, with less than two-thirds of one percent of total statewide cases, has been the third hardest hit city in the State for COVID-19 related unemployment claims. The High Desert cities of Lancaster and Palmdale, both of which lagged behind the State's decade long economic recovery, are struggling more under the current economic conditions. The livelihood of our constituents in this region depends on their ability to begin the economic recovery process safely, responsibly, and at their own pace, separate from the rest of the county.

We thank you for your attention and consideration on this pressing issue that will mean so much to the hundreds of thousands of people living in this area. Please let us know if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,



SCOTT WILK  
Senator, 21<sup>st</sup> District



TOM LACKEY  
Assemblyman, 36<sup>th</sup> District

CC: Supervisor Kathryn Barger, 5<sup>th</sup> District, Los Angeles County  
Mayor Cameron Smyth, City of Santa Clarita  
Mayor R. Rex Parris, City of Lancaster  
Mayor Steven D. Hofbauer, City of Palmdale