



MAYOR REX RICHARDSON

May 29, 2024

The Honorable Mike McGuire
Senate President Pro Tempore
1021 O Street, Suite 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Robert Rivas
Speaker California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 8330
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Caroline Menjivar
Chair, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Subcommittee
No. 3 on Health & Human Services
1021 O Street, Suite 6720
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Akilah Weber
Chair, Assembly Budget
Subcommittee No. 1 on Health
1021 O Street, Suite 4130
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Protect State and Local Public Health Funding

Dear President Pro Tempore McGuire, Speaker Rivas, and Budget Chairs Menjivar and Weber:

On behalf of the City of Long Beach (City), I write to respectfully request the Legislature to reject the elimination of Future of Public Health (FoPH) funds included in Governor Newsom's proposed Fiscal Year 2025 May Revision, which includes a \$300 million cut to state and local health departments, as well as a \$52.5 million reduction in the current fiscal year.

The Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services (Health Department) has been improving the health and wellness of the Long Beach community for more than a century. Long Beach is one of only three city-run health departments in California, allowing for better engagement with its people, neighborhoods, businesses and community partners, and a greater understanding of the city's strengths and needs. The Health Department serves as the first line of defense against all public health threats in Long Beach. To carry out this key responsibility, it relies on a highly skilled and specialized workforce to reduce and prevent communicable diseases, environmental hazards, and other adverse health conditions and outbreaks. With 592 employees located in 14 sites throughout the city, the Health Department operates with a \$288 million annual budget, 83 percent of which comes from Federal, State, County and private funds. The proposed elimination of FoPH funds will have an estimated \$2.8 million annual impact on the Health Department's budget. The proposed cuts in the May Revision will reduce the public health workforce and impact the Health Department's ability to address core foundational public health services.

The FoPH initiative emphasizes that everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, geography, or income level, deserves the chance to be healthy – with the goal of closing the life expectancy gap by 50 percent and reduce disease burden by 15 percent within in the next decade. One of the main priorities of FoPH is to expand the public health workforce by creating new positions. Using FoPH funds, the Heath Department hired 16 current staff with five pending to promote health and wellness within the Long Beach community. These investments represent the very few initiatives dedicated to strengthening the governmental public health workforce and infrastructure in California. However, the proposed cuts threaten the Health Department's ability to address critical existing and emerging public health issues within the Long Beach community. The administrative team would be significantly reduced, causing major repercussions for the Health Department's operational efficiency and effectiveness. With responsibility for

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supporting over 55 programs, including racial and health equity, violence prevention, mental health resourcing, and other critical services, the administrative team plays a crucial role in managing finances, human resources, invoicing, payments, procurement, contracting, and other duties. Critical functions such as financial management and compliance may suffer, impacting the Health Department's overall performance and ability to deliver on its objectives. Moreover, the Health Department's fund development team would be reduced by over 60 percent, which will further diminish the Health Department's ability to pursue other funding opportunities. The public affairs team would also be reduced by 75 percent, which will impede the Health Department's capacity to communicate vital information and public health guidance during public health emergencies.

On May 2, 2024, City Health Officer Dr. Anissa Davis declared a local public health emergency to strengthen the City's preparedness and ability to respond to a localized tuberculosis (TB) outbreak. Cutting FoPH funds would further strain the existing workforce and systems to adequately respond to this emergency and future public health emergencies in Long Beach. Furthermore, investments in staff training, workforce wellness, and data modernization efforts would also be eliminated. The City is committed to supporting ongoing, structural funding for public health jurisdictions to coordinate and invest in public health infrastructure, workforce, equity, STD testing and prevention, and other local needs. The City recognizes the state's current budget challenges and the difficult choices facing the Legislature as it grapples with a significant deficit. However, state and local public health departments play a vital role in preventing the spread of diseases and reducing healthcare costs among historically marginalized communities. I respectfully urge the Legislature to protect state and local public health funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rex Richardson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mayor Rex Richardson
City of Long Beach

cc: The Honorable Lena Gonzalez, State Senate, 33rd District
The Honorable Mike Gipson, State Assembly, 65th District
The Honorable Josh Lowenthal, State Assembly, 69th District