



December 2, 2019

Mary D. Nichols, Board Chair  
California Air Resources Board  
1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear California Air Resources Control Board,

On behalf of the Desert Healthcare District, I am writing to express our support for California Air Resources Board (CARB) to select eastern Coachella Valley (ECV) as a second-year grantee for emissions and air quality monitoring for communities most affected by cumulative impacts of poor air quality.

Children in eastern Coachella Valley are disproportionately affected by poor air quality, which is manifested in a higher prevalence of asthma amongst its residents (22.4%) compared to the state of California (7.9%). According to the CDC, asthma episodes have declined nationwide in children from all races and ethnicities since 2001; however ECV residents continue to exhibit higher than state and national average rates of asthma and other respiratory symptoms, including wheezing (35.3%), allergies (36.1%), bronchitis (28.6%), and dry cough (33.3%). It is estimated that a high number of children and adults with asthma and other respiratory illnesses are underdiagnosed.

High emissions levels and poor air quality directly affect the health of our residents. It affects children's early development, the severity of asthma attacks and the development of symptoms. The eastern Coachella Valley has been historically underserved in areas of healthcare, availability of resources and programs that address basic needs. The AB 617, will build capacity in the community, provide its members with the tools to measure the air quality in our region, and provide the capacity to decide how best to address the issues of air quality affecting our community resident. Most importantly, AB 617 will grant a greater opportunity for local community organization to coordinate and collaborate in partnership to address some of these issues. Actionable items include installation of filtration for schools as well permanent projects directly addressing specific pollutants or areas in our communities.

AB 617s unique approach of direct engagement with communities, driven by community members who are experts in their own communities shows a unique ability to address community issues. This approach will build capacity, build leadership, and create unique

partnership between schools, healthcare providers, community members, community organization, cities among other stakeholders that are key in advancing local issues especially around the air quality in our communities. This provides us a new community-focused approach to improve health care in communities like East Coachella Valley most impacted by air pollution.

As the Desert Healthcare District, we strongly support California Air Resources Board to strongly consider selecting East Coachella Valley to be funded for the second year for air quality and emissions reductions.

Sincerely,



Conrado E. Barzaga, MD  
Chief Executive Officer  
Desert Healthcare District & Foundation