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April 26, 2023

The Honorable Reginald Jones-Sawyer
Chair, Assembly Public Safety Committee
1020 N Street, Room 111
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support of Fentanyl and Substance Use Related Legislation

Dear Assembly Member Jones-Sawyer,

The City of Arcata is encouraged that the Assembly Public Safety Committee will be considering a slate of bills that could help save countless lives throughout our state. The City of Arcata supports several critically needed fentanyl and substance use-related pieces of legislation. These measures would stem the tide of illicit substance-related deaths in California and bring relief to the many communities mourning tragic, preventable deaths.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 71,000 people died from synthetic opioid-related overdose in the United States in 2021, of which, 7,000 deaths occurred in California. In other words, 1 out of every 10 deaths from synthetic opioids in the United States occurs in California. The increase of drug-related overdose deaths is largely being driven by the increase in synthetic opioid-related deaths, primarily fentanyl.

Local communities experience the realities of the opioid epidemic every day through the increasing toll on families, first responders, educators, child welfare agencies, public safety officials, health professionals, and community organizations, among others. As committed partners in finding solutions to address the growing substance use crisis in our state, the City of Arcata supports the following measures:

Assembly Public Safety Special Hearing on Fentanyl

AB 33 (Bains) Fentanyl Addiction and Overdose Prevention Task Force.

AB 367 (Maienschein) Controlled Substances: Enhancements.

AB 474 (Rodriguez) State Threat Assessment Center: Transnational Criminal Organizations.

AB 955 (Petrie-Norris) Controlled Substances

The City of Arcata has witnessed firsthand the death and destruction that fentanyl can wreak in a community. We have seen community members, especially the unhoused, die after ingesting fentanyl. Four overdose deaths occurred in a five-day span in April 2022 and two additional deaths occurred in September 2022. In a separate incident a small child in cardiac arrest was revived by doctors at a local hospital after being treated with Narcan after ingesting suspected fentanyl laced medication left within their reach inside their home.

Arcata public safety personnel and community members have saved countless lives through the deployment of Narcan and Arcata PD Officers work alongside local task force agents in our attempts to dismantle drug trafficking organizations responsible for delivering significant quantities of fentanyl to Arcata and Humboldt County from the Bay Area. More collaborative resources would be a welcome sight to help stop the flow of such a deadly drug, to hold traffickers accountable, to prevent overdoses and to treat those affected by fentanyl.

Now, more than ever, is the time to take action on measures that will preserve human life and improve the safety and well-being of all Californians. For these reasons, the City of Arcata requests your support on these fentanyl related measures.

Sincerely,



Sarah Schaefer, Mayor
City of Arcata

Cc:

Senator Mike McGuire, Senator.McGuire@senate.ca.gov

Congressman Jared Huffman, John.Driscoll@mail.house.gov, Ciara.Emery@mail.house.gov

Assembly Member Jim Wood, Ruth.Valenzuela@asm.ca.gov

Sara Sanders, League Regional Public Affairs Manager, sanders@cacities.org

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