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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF MONO

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Scheereen Dedman, Clerk of the Board

November 16 , 2021

To: Honorable Dee Dee Myers, Senior Advisor and Director
Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz)

Honorable Samuel Assefa, Director
Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR)

Honorable Natalie Palugyai, Secretary
California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (LWDA)

From: Jennifer Kreitz, Mono County Supervisor
Mono County Chair of the Board

RE: CERF Public Comments submitted to: WSBCERF@edd.ca.gov

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF) program regarding the proposed regions, program parameters and planning process. Mono County appreciates the diligent effort put forth by your agencies and is excited about the potential economic and community benefits of the program. On behalf of Mono County, I would like to provide the following initial comments:

Eastern Sierra Region:

The proposed Eastern Sierra Region includes seven counties: Mono, Inyo, Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Mariposa. While these seven counties are connected as a grouping by adjacent county borders, Mono and Inyo counties are separated geographically from the counties on the west side November through May by the Sierra Nevada mountain range because of the east-west highway winter pass closures. We respectfully request a reevaluation of this region, not because we have any issues working together as partners with our friends on the west side, but because developing a regional plan for economies where there is no trans-Sierra access for half the year could result in fragmentation of the planning process, a disparity in compatible projects and negatively impact the overall success and outcome of the program. We recommend that the Eastern Sierra Region include Mono, Inyo and Alpine counties and that Amador,

Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Mariposa be organically grouped together as their own region on the west side.

Sub-regional Planning:

For regions with two or more counties, we respectfully request that the funded CERF planning process includes a sub-regional planning component to complement the macro plan for the region. Within the proposed Eastern Sierra Region, for example, the land mass covered is extremely vast – from Death Valley across the Sierra Nevada mountain range to the Central Valley -- and includes geography, communities, resources, and labor pool access that are significantly diverse. A sub-regional planning element would benefit the individual partners in the region as well as the entire region. In this regard, we strongly suggest that the convenor, as the recipient for the planning funds, develop a specific component in the Eastern Sierra that can increase their capacity in our area to provide proper support for planning the anticipated economic development projects. We look forward to receiving additional clarification of the allowable uses of the planning funds by the convening agency.

Eligible Applicants:

We are disappointed by the fact that cities, counties, and councils of governments (COGs) are currently not listed as applicants eligible to apply directly for CERF funding as outlined in the program parameters provided by the Office of Planning and Research. It appears that eligible applicants only include non-profit organizations, Indigenous tribes, institutions of higher education, and District Organizations of an Economic Development District (EDD). Cities, counties or COGS are not included as eligible. Inyo and Mono Counties are not part of an EDD and as a result, our local municipal and county governments – key stakeholders in the CERF planning process – would be unable to apply. Indeed, many jurisdictions are not part of an EDD and so this exclusion creates broad inequities. We respectfully request a review of the eligibility criteria and for consideration to allow local government entities and jurisdictions to be added as eligible applicants. The Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) operates as a Joint Powers Authority, and was established specifically to take advantage of opportunities such as the CERF program.

Thank you again for all you have done to prepare for the roll-out of the CERF program. We look forward to the process and appreciate your consideration of our comments. If you should have any questions, please contact Mono County Economic Development Director, Alicia Vennos at avennos@mono.ca.gov, or 760-924-1743.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Kreitz
Mono County Chair of the Board

CC: Robert Lawton, Mono County CAO
CC: Alicia Vennos, Mono County Economic Development Director

