



# East Contra Costa Fire Protection District

## ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

February 3, 2021

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senate  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Alex Padilla  
United States Senate  
B03 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jerry McNerney  
United States House of Representatives  
2265 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mark DeSaulnier  
United States House of Representatives  
503 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

### **RE: Support H.R. 535 and S. 91, the Special Districts Provide Essential Services Act**

Dear Senator Feinstein, Senator Padilla, Representative McNerney and Representative DeSaulnier:

On behalf of the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District (ECCFPD), I am writing to respectfully request your support of H.R. 535 and S. 91, the Special Districts Provide Essential Services Act, and its inclusion in any potential pandemic relief package. These bills would ensure that your constituents receiving essential services, like fire protection, water, wastewater, childcare, healthcare, resource and agricultural conservation from a special district, rather than a city or county, are not excluded from future COVID-19 relief approved for state and local governments.

ECCFPD provides firefighting and prevention, emergency medical services, hazardous waste response, and other services relating to the protection of lives and property. The District serves 249 square miles in eastern Contra Costa County including the cities of Brentwood and Oakley, and the communities of Discovery Bay, Bethel Island, Knightsen, Byron, Marsh Creek, and Morgan Territory, which house approximately 128,000 residents. Access to federal relief resources is critical to help our district confront COVID-19 and overcome the pandemic's fiscal impacts.

Our employees remain dedicated to providing the services on which our communities depend, yet our district has yet to receive the direct access to funding that other government agencies, as well as businesses and non-profits, have received. The costs associated with regular COVID-19 testing for employees, worker's compensation, ensuring adequate staffing, and procuring personal protective equipment has been significant.

Our district is just one of 2,000 across the state that, altogether, anticipate a \$1.26 billion impact due to COVID-19 through the end of Fiscal Year 2021. Furthermore, 46 percent are unlikely to maintain current staffing of essential workers or are uncertain that they can, and 54 percent are unlikely to maintain or are uncertain about the level of essential services they can provide through this fiscal year.


HR 535 and S. 91 are identical to the bipartisan S. 4308 from the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress. These measures would allow the vital services that communities rely upon to continue, while also

providing greater certainty for special districts to retain their essential workers. Specifically, the legislation would establish a federal definition of “special district”, allow special districts’ access to future Coronavirus Relief Fund allocations, and designate special districts as “eligible issuers” of the Federal Reserve Board’s Municipal Liquidity Facility.

Without ready access to pandemic relief available to other units of local government, the risk of special districts’ inability to continue providing uninterrupted, vital services to our communities will continue to grow. We look forward to working with you to ensure all essential workers and the vulnerable communities they serve receive equitable access to these important relief funds.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
  
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Brian Helmick, Fire Chief