



MAYOR ROBERT GARCIA
CITY OF LONG BEACH

April 14, 2021

The Honorable Freddie Rodriguez
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 2188
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for AB 240 (Rodriguez)—Local Health Department Workforce Assessment

Dear Assemblymember Rodriguez,

On behalf of the City of Long Beach, I write to support AB 240. This bill would direct the California Department of Public Health to evaluate workforce needs and make recommendations to adequately fund local public health. As a City with one of only three municipal health departments in California, the City appreciates that SB 240 recognizes the need to continuously improve local public health operations.

When the statewide and local COVID-19 pandemic emergency orders were declared over a year ago, the City's Department of Health and Human Services (Health Department) had only five surveillance and five public health emergency management staff for a City of nearly half-million people. To meet the demands of the pandemic, the Health Department mobilized its 300 employees, reassigned over 100 staff from other City departments, and coordinated assistance from the United States National Guard for comprehensive response efforts. The Health Department has led the establishment of a COVID-19 hotline and basic needs line, which has received nearly 57,000 emails and 123,000 calls to date, and proactively planned and conducted its own COVID-19 testing and vaccination sites as the infrastructure has become available. As of April 2, 2021, the City collected more than 431,000 test specimens amongst its six testing sites, and 83 percent of older adults and 37 percent of Long Beach residents ages 16 and older have received at least one vaccine.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shed light on the tremendous capacity of local health departments, and AB 240 will help sustain the local public health workforce and services well beyond the pandemic. The City supports legislation to improve and innovate public health functions through ongoing evaluation, research, and quality improvement. AB 240 would use proven practices to prepare local public health departments for future workforce and resource needs. Given these reasons, the City supports AB 240.

Sincerely,

Mayor Robert Garcia
City of Long Beach

cc: The Honorable Speaker Anthony Rendon, State Assembly
The Honorable Lena Gonzalez, State Senate, 33rd District
The Honorable Tom Umberg, State Senate, 34th District
The Honorable Steven Bradford, State Senate, 35th District
The Honorable Mike Gipson, State Assembly, 64th District
The Honorable Patrick O'Donnell, State Assembly, 70th District