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June 4, 2019

The Honorable Wendy Carrillo
State Capitol
P.O. Box 902849
Sacramento, CA 94249

RE: **HOAC Supports AB 556**

Dear Assemblymember Carrillo:

The Health Officers Association of California (HOAC), which represents the physician health officers of California's sixty-one city and county jurisdictions, supports your AB 556, related to the development of a community access program focused on equitable engagement, especially for rural and urban disadvantaged communities, with natural, cultural, educational, and recreational resources.

Access to the outdoors has numerous benefits for young people. Public health officers are particularly interested in measures that provide youth with physical activity, support healthy lifestyles, and promote mental wellness. Additionally, students with access to outdoor experiences generally perform better in school and exhibit higher levels of academic engagement. From an educational standpoint, providing access to the outdoors can encourage a greater understanding of environmental issues, including natural resources management and environmental justice. Familiarity with these issues may also engender a sense of civic engagement and pride in one's community.

Thank you for introducing this important measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kat DeBurgh".

Kat DeBurgh, MPH
Executive Director