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June 27, 2019

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
State Capitol, Room 5160
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: **HOAC Supports AB 836**

Dear Assemblymember Wicks:

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 836, related to the designation of ventilated spaces for the public during emergency air quality events.

The 2017 and 2018 wildfires demonstrated how catastrophic wildfire events impact the quality of air for residents, even those who live hundreds of miles away from the burned area. This toxic air, which often contains elevated levels of wood smoke and contaminants from burned structures, vehicles, and consumer products, can travel the length of the state, causing negative health impacts to children, the elderly, and individuals with existing respiratory problems like heart or lung diseases or asthma. Further, N-95 masks or other personal protective equipment is not always appropriate for these individuals. This means that those who must be outside due to homelessness or other issues are left exposed to potentially harmful air.

AB 836 helps to address this problem. This bill will establish a grant program to retrofit ventilation systems to create a network of clean air centers, prioritizing applicants located in communities with high cumulative exposure burdens. This will help California's most vulnerable residents have access to a vital resource for health: clean air.

Thank you for introducing this important measure.

Sincerely,

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

Kat DeBurgh, MPH
Executive Director