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July 19, 2023

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
1021 O St., Ste. 7630
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: OPPOSE, AB 1168 (Bennett) Emergency medical services: prehospital EMS – as amended on July 13, 2023

Dear Chairman Portantino,

On behalf of the Solano County Board of Supervisors, I write in opposition to AB 1168, which would overturn extensive statutory and case law that has repeatedly affirmed county responsibility for the administration of emergency medical services. AB 1168 would also limit the flexibility to design systems that equitably serve residents throughout our jurisdiction. With the passage of the Emergency Medical Services Act in 1980, California created a framework for local EMS systems that are timely, safe, and equitable for all residents. To accomplish this, counties contract with both public and private agencies to ensure coverage of underserved areas and provide uniform services throughout geographically diverse areas.

AB 1168 would allow eligible city and fire districts to administer EMS including providing their own or contracted non-exclusive ambulance service. In the case of the City of Oxnard v. County of Ventura, the court determined that the city's case "would disrupt the status quo, impermissibly broaden Health and Safety Code section 1797.201's exception in a fashion that would swallow the EMS Act itself, fragment the long-integrated emergency medical system, and undermine the purposes of the EMS Act." Solano County therefore is concerned with the legislative intent of AB 1168 and believes it distorts the findings in the City of Oxnard v. County of Ventura case and would set a dangerous precedent that could impact other jurisdictions in the future. AB 1168, as noted, opens the door to undo years of litigation and agreements between cities and counties regarding the provision of emergency medical services and as drafted causes a great deal of uncertainty for counties who are the responsible local government entity for providing equitable emergency medical services for all of their residents.

AB 1168 sets a dangerous legislative precedent that would allow cities and fire districts to have .201 authorities bestowed when none previously existed. Subsequently, cities or fire districts could back out of longstanding agreements with counties. Counties would then be forced to open already complex ambulance contracting processes while scrambling to provide continued services to impacted residents. Unfortunately, this measure creates a system where there will be haves and have nots – well-resourced cities or districts will be able to provide robust services whereas disadvantaged communities, with a less robust tax base, will have a patchwork of providers – the very problem the EMS Act, passed over 40 years ago, intended to resolve.

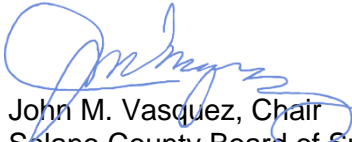
For these reasons, Solano County must respectfully oppose AB 1168 and urges you to vote no.

Honorable Anthony Portantino

July 19, 2023

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Sincerely,



John M. Vasquez, Chair
Solano County Board of Supervisors

CC:

Members, Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable, Steve Bennett, Assemblymember

The Honorable Bill Dodd, Senator

The Honorable Lori D. Wilson, Assemblymember

Paragon Government Relations

Karen Lange, SYASL Partners, Inc.