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June 4, 2015

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Karen L. Smith, MD, MPH, Director
California Department of Public Health
1615 Capitol Avenue, Suite 73.720
PO Box 997377, MS 0500
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377

RE: SB 591 (Pan): California Tobacco Tax Act of 2015 Support

Dear Dr. Smith:

The CCLHO Board voted to take a support recommendation on SB 591, a bill co-sponsored by Senator Pan and Assembly Member Bonta that would impose an additional tax of \$2.00 per pack of cigarettes. CCLHO strongly urges CDPH to also support this legislation.

Tobacco causes approximately 540,000 American deaths each year. Price increases in tobacco have been shown to decrease consumption, especially in price-sensitive segments of the population, such as youth. Despite decreases in consumption, tobacco prevention activities must be maintained to sustain continuous decreases in tobacco consumption, a significant risk factor for many poor health outcomes.

SB 591 would require that the additional revenues collected from the \$2.00 tax be deposited into a specific fund and transferred to the following State Departments for the following activities:

- Tobacco Prevention and Education, with funds directed to the Department of Public Health (CDPH), the Department of Education (CDE), and the University of California (UC),
- Activities related to Health Care access and quality, with funds directed to the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), and
- Tobacco-related Law Enforcement, with funds directed to the Department of Justice (DOJ), CDPH and the Board of Equalization (BOE).

CCLHO recommends that a minimum percentage of funds within both the Prevention and Enforcement Funds be directed to CDPH. Of note, be reminded that Prop 99, Prop 10, the Breast Cancer Fund, and the California General Fund would be held harmless due to any decreased revenues from declining tobacco consumption as result of this bill.

Additional references linking cigarettes to adverse health effects include the following:

- <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMsa1407211> -- Recent research shows that the impact of smoking on mortality is far beyond what has previously been estimated, with more Americans losing their lives each year due to tobacco and the numerous other associated deaths.

Karen L. Smith, MD, MPH, Director
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- <http://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/21/2/172.full> -- This article cites evidence to support increase in tobacco taxes as a highly effective strategy to reduce decrease tobacco consumption.

As you know, the California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) is an organization of all legally appointed physician health officers in California's 61 city and county jurisdictions established in statute in 1947 to consult with, advise, and make recommendations to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), other departments, boards, commissions and officials of federal, state, and local government, the Legislature, and any other organization or association on matters affecting health.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at Muntu.davis@acgov.org or 510-267-8010.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Muntu Davis MD, MPH". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Muntu Davis, MD, MPH
President, California Conference of Local Health Officers