April 16, 2024

The Honorable Freddie Rodriguez

Chair, Assembly Emergency Management Committee

1021 O Street, Room 5140

Sacramento, CA

The Honorable Mia Bonta

Chair, Committee on Health Management

1020 N Street, Suite 385

Sacramento, CA 95814

**Subject: Assembly Bill 2973 Emergency services.**

Dear Assemblymembers Rodriguez and Bonta:

The Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors is writing this letter to express our concerns regarding Assembly Bill 2973 (Hart). The March 21st and April 2nd amendments make several consequential changes to the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system.

First, the bill would place the Local Emergency Medical Services Agency (LEMSA) medical director and their staff directly under the supervision of the county board of supervisors, which would move them from the current emergency medical services (EMS) agency structure. Additionally, AB 2973 would require Boards of Supervisors to engage in a competitive process for selecting providers for exclusive operating areas (EOAs) and then exempt contracts with county, city, or special district agencies from being exclusive operating areas, in effect exempting those contracts from a competitive process. Finally, the amendments require the Board of Supervisors to review and approve EMS plans.

These changes are significantly concerning for our rural county, which would change an existing and successfully functioning LEMSA program. From the language, it appears that the Board of Supervisors would have management of the EMS agency and ambulance service but the changes do address other services already provided by LEMSA. This splitting of duties would be detrimental to small, rural counties with limited staff and resources.

Another potential consequence of AB 2973 would be to erode the long-standing effective two-tiered EMS system in the State of California. The two-tiered system affords the flexibility of the EMS agencies to administer its EMS program based on system needs, however, AB 2973 as currently written would overturn an extensive statutory and case law record that has repeatedly affirmed county responsibility for the administration of emergency medical services and with that, the flexibility to design systems to equitably serve residents throughout their jurisdiction. The measure will result in more litigation and fragmentation of the EMS system.

Just as important as our concerns above, AB 2973 will have significant consequences on the delivery of emergency medical services. We encourage your committee to consider and adopt the recent amendments proposed by the Rural County Representatives of California. These edits would clarify that

a competitive process is not required if the Board of Supervisors decides to keep ambulance services within the public sector. In addition, the edits propose to remove the provisions that require the Board of Supervisors (or LEMSA JPA Board, etc.) to approve all EMS contracts, RFPs, and EMS plans.

This letter was approved by the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors on April 16, 2024, by the following vote:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain:

Sincerely,

Michael N. Kobseff

Chair, Board of Supervisors

cc: Assemblywoman Megan Dahle

Senator Brian Dahle

Rural County Representative of California (RCRC)

California State Association of Counties (CSAC)

Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange