March 21, 2024

The Honorable Lofgren

U.S. House of Representatives

1401 Longworth House Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20515

**RE: Support Request – H.R. 7525 *Special District Grant Accessibility Act***

Dear Representative Lofgren:

On behalf of the South Santa Clara Valley Memorial District (SSCVMD), we respectfully request that you support the *Special District Grant Accessibility Act* (H.R. 7525). This important bipartisan legislation was overwhelmingly approved by the House Oversight and Accountability Committee on March 7 and is now awaiting action by the full House. We urge you to work with congressional leadership to ensure that the legislation is considered in a timely fashion.

The South Santa Clara Valley Memorial District provides a place for military veterans and their families to meet, socialize and find links to benefits, housing, employment, and other services so important to those who have served our country. This law will potentially provide new opportunities for desperately needed funds to support our mission.

H.R. 7525 would require the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to issue guidance to federal agencies requiring special districts to be recognized as local governments for the purpose of federal financial assistance determinations. The bill also would codify in federal law a long-overdue, formal definition of “special district.”

Special districts are local governments created by the people of a community to deliver specialized services essential to their health, safety, economy, and well-being. In the State of California, there are over 2,000 special districts providing a broad range of essential services and infrastructure.

Despite the significance of special districts throughout the United States, federal law lacks a consistent definition of these special purpose units of local government. As a result, some communities served by special districts face challenges in accessing federal funding opportunities as their local service providers are commonly omitted from the definition of eligible units of local government in legislative proposals that authorize federal programs and funding. Moreover, special districts lack official population figures and are therefore not recognized by the U.S. Census Bureau as “geographic units of government.” As a result, special districts are unable to gain access to certain formula-driven grants and resources.

Again, we urge you to support the *Special District Grant Accessibility Act* and to work with your House colleagues to prioritize passage of this critically important bill. Thank you for considering this request.

John Ceballos

SSCVMD Board President

cc: California Special Districts Association [via email: advocacy@csda.net]