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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**California Counties Applaud Governor Newsom for Seizing Once-in-a-Lifetime Opportunity to Enact Transformative Change in California**

*May Budget Revision Investments Reflect the Critical Role Counties Play in Providing Essential Services to Communities*

SACRAMENTO – CSAC commends Governor Newsom’s bold action and historic investments in County priorities— broadband access, homelessness and housing, disaster and drought resilience and recovery, and more— in the May Budget Revision will enhance the quality of life in our communities, and accelerate and sustain economic recovery for years to come.

“As the delivery system for so many critical, direct government services, California’s Counties are where the rubber meets the road between the state and local communities,” said CSAC President and Sonoma County Supervisor James Gore. “The county and state partnership has been on full display throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and it’s no surprise to see county priorities so substantially reflected in Governor Newsom’s proposed May Budget Revision. We tremendously appreciate his ongoing leadership and support for the county-state partnership.”

“These strategic investments in priorities will help close the gaps in the county-administered safety net and begin to address some of the systemic inequities laid bare throughout the pandemic,” said CSAC Executive Director Graham Knaus. “Kudos to Governor Newsom for leveraging this unprecedented budget surplus and influx of federal funding. Together with the Administration, the Legislature, and our County coalition partners, this revised budget proposal will eviscerate the digital divide and enable landmark progress in our communities.”

Descriptions of key County priorities included in Governor Newsom’s May Revision state budget proposal for FY 21-22 follow. California’s Counties look forward to working closely with legislative leaders in the coming days and weeks to ensure the final budget continues to reflect county priorities.

**Broadband**

CSAC led a statewide coalition of education, health, local government, and economic policy organizations advocating for significant investment in infrastructure and services to close the digital divide and extend broadband access across the state.

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The coalition deeply appreciates Governor Newsom’s commitment to closing the digital divide with a historic investment of \$7 billion over three years to build out “middle mile” infrastructure and support “last mile” expansion. This bold action will ensure equitable access to public health, public safety, education, entrepreneurship and economic opportunities regardless of geography or population. California’s counties and coalition partners look forward to working together with all stakeholders to build this infrastructure and increase broadband access and affordability statewide.

### **Homelessness and Housing**

Addressing the homelessness crisis is a County priority that predates the COVID-19 pandemic. Counties share Governor Newsom’s urgency and focus in reaching sustainable solutions made possible by a proposed \$12 billion, two-year investment. Building upon innovative housing solutions explored and refined throughout the pandemic, Governor Newsom’s bold proposal provides for thousands more homes, and heavily invests in supports that will help prevent families from experiencing future homelessness. Counties appreciate the ongoing partnership and coordination with Governor Newsom, his administration and local government leaders at all levels in making significant, sustainable progress on this vexing issue.

### **Disaster and Drought Resilience and Recovery**

Wildfires, earthquakes, floods, droughts, sea-level changes—statewide, California faces these threats and more. Counties, which lead emergency response at the local level, are deeply appreciative of the combined \$7.1 billion proposed in the May Revision to address drought resilience as well as wildfire and emergency response. As California heads into another very dry year, Counties appreciate funding directed to community hardening, improving fairgrounds and emergency facilities, as well as significant investments in local water systems.

### **Behavioral Health**

The Governor’s proposal includes the most significant investment in the behavioral health of Californians, with a special emphasis on the social-emotional health of youth aged 0 to 25, in history. The \$4 billion total funds for youth behavioral health services includes creating a youth substance use disorder treatment continuum, bolstering the workforce, and supporting additional partnerships between county mental health plans and schools—investments that will transform the lives of youth and their families. Coupled with the Governor’s proposed \$1.4 billion investment in local behavioral health infrastructure grants, this proposed May Revision will increase access to behavioral health care for all residents, regardless of location, insurer, or diagnosis.

### **Public Health**

Protecting the health of Californians is the top priority of county-led public health departments, and Counties acted swiftly and tirelessly to respond to the pandemic. Counties appreciate the urgency with which Governor Newsom addressed COVID-19 impacts to public health departments in the January budget, as well as the additional one-time funding for public hospitals included in the May Revision proposal. As county-led public health departments, hospitals, clinics, and medical professionals care for our most vulnerable community members and have struggled with a decade of meager funding, Counties implore the Legislature and Governor Newsom to consider investing to rebuild public health not only for today but tomorrow.

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**In-Home Supportive Services**

Another key County priority addressed in the May Budget Revision is In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS). Counties were facing the prospect of paying nearly double for IHSS provider wage increases starting January 1, 2022. Instead, this proposal will ensure the county share of costs remains the same as current practice and will facilitate continued progress on IHSS collective bargaining agreements.

*California State Association of Counties (CSAC) is the voice of California's 58 counties at the state and federal level.*

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