

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

February 10, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor  
State of California  
1303 10<sup>th</sup> St, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Mr. Robert Fenton  
Senior Official Performing the Duties of Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)  
500 C St, SW  
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Governor Newsom and Mr. Fenton:

We are encouraged by your announcement of a planned community COVID-19 vaccination site in the Central Valley as part of FEMA's broader effort to establish 100 vaccination sites nationwide. However, the unacceptably low vaccination rates in the Central Valley merit the establishment of multiple distribution sites throughout the region. As the largest state in the nation by population, we vitally need more than three sites in California, including additional sites in the Central Valley's remote rural communities.

The Central Valley is the fastest growing region in California. Migration accounts for nearly two-thirds of the Valley's recent population growth, creating one of the most diverse and socioeconomically challenged regions in the nation. More than 50 percent of the population is Hispanic and one in five Valley residents lives in poverty. The area's rural farming communities are home to thousands of low-income essential workers who risk COVID-19 exposure to keep American families fed.

Counties in the Central Valley were leading the state in cases per 100,000 residents over the summer, yet most Valley counties' vaccination rates lag behind those of Los Angeles and Bay Area Counties. According to the California Department of Health and Human Services, Los Angeles County has vaccinated 15,036 residents per 100,000, while Fresno County has vaccinated just 12,829 per 100,000, a 14.7 percent lower vaccination rate. Stanislaus County is similarly impacted, with a 13 percent lower vaccination rate than Los Angeles County. While Alameda County, where the Oakland site is located, has vaccinated 14,664 residents per 100,000, the rate in Kings County is just 6,840 per 100,000, a staggering 53 percent lower rate. Tulare, Kern, Merced, and San Joaquin Counties are likewise severely underserved, averaging 20 to 38 percent lower vaccination rates than Los Angeles or Alameda Counties.

Vaccine distribution has been severely limited in the Central Valley communities where it is needed most. There are simply not enough vaccines being shipped and distributed to our

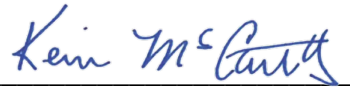
rural communities, yet key resources are being directed to areas of the state that already have far better vaccination rates than the Valley. While California has opened up access to the vaccine for the next tier in urban areas across the state, County Public Health officials in the Valley have had to cancel thousands of appointments to guarantee they have enough second doses for those who received the first. This is troubling, especially amid reports that more than a third of California's doses appear to be going unused. Our communities need additional support now so we can adequately meet the demands and expectations set by the State. Valley families and workers deserve better.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought an unprecedented level of hardship for our residents. We look forward to working closely with you to ensure our communities have access to efficient and equitable vaccine distribution, including establishing additional joint state-FEMA vaccine administration sites in the Central Valley.

Sincerely,



David G. Valadao  
Member of Congress



Kevin McCarthy  
House Republican Leader



Jim Costa  
Member of Congress



Devin Nunes  
Member of Congress



Josh Harder  
Member of Congress