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July 7, 2021

The Honorable Lena Gonzalez
Chair, Senate Transportation Committee
State Capitol, Room 2209
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 43 (Friedman): Traffic Safety
As Amended on July 6, 2021 – SUPPORT
Set for hearing in Senate Transportation – July 13, 2021**

Dear Senator Gonzalez:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) supports Assembly Bill 43 by Assemblymember Friedman, which would grant the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and local authorities greater flexibility in setting speed limits based on recommendations included in the January 2020 report prepared by the California State Transportation Agency's (CalSTA) Zero Traffic Fatalities Task Force (Task Force). California counties have taken leading roles in promoting a safe systems approach on their local roadways and these efforts would be directly bolstered by the statutory changes included in AB 43.

CalSTA's report was developed and published pursuant to AB 2363, which Assemblymember Friedman authored in 2018. As noted in the Task Force report, research shows that higher speed limits lead to greater traffic-related fatalities and injuries. However, most speed limits across California are currently set based on the 85th percentile speed, or the speed at which 85 percent of the traffic travels at or below. This methodology is based on the speed at which drivers feel comfortable driving and does not account for safety-related factors. Among other important and beneficial changes, AB 43 would grant local governments flexibility in setting lower speed limits in high-injury streets and in areas with high concentrations of bicycles and pedestrians.

CSAC supports efforts to reduce traffic-related fatalities and injuries by promoting vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle safety, and AB 43 would allow local agencies to set speed limits based on safety-related factors and lead to a reduction in traffic-related injuries and fatalities. County roads often have higher rates of injuries and deaths than state facilities, so CSAC has consistently advocated for additional funding to support evidence-based infrastructure improvements that reduce the severity and frequency of collisions through the [Local Highway Safety Improvement Program](#). Moreover, using flexible Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account funding from SB 1 (Beall,

2017), cities and counties completed over 1,450 local projects that included bicycle or pedestrian components during the first three fiscal years of funding. Combining the increased flexibility for setting speed limits offered by AB 43 with continued and increased funding for programs that support safe access for all local roadway users will help California change the trajectory on road safety and move toward zero deaths.

For these reasons, we strongly support AB 43. If you need additional information about our position, please contact me at clee@counties.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chitf", written in a cursive style.

Christopher Lee
Legislative Representative

cc: The Honorable Laura Friedman, California State Assembly
Honorable Members, Senate Transportation Committee
Melissa White, Consultant, Senate Transportation Committee
Ted Morley, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus