



January 21, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

As mayors representing the six cities within Merced County, we have serious reservations over the State's allocation of COVID-19 vaccine to Merced County and would like to respectfully request your assistance in correcting this inequity.

It has come to our attention that Merced County has the second-lowest allocation of COVID-19 vaccine in California. Merced County's average allocation of 12 doses per 1,000 residents stands in stark contrast to San Diego County (57.6 doses per 1,000 residents) and neighboring Santa Clara County (46.7 doses per 1,000 residents), just to provide a couple examples. The City of Pasadena alone has received over three times as much vaccine as the County of Merced, despite a population of 100,000 less. We understand that the vaccine is in short supply, but this discrepancy is far too great.

We've been assured by the County that we have the ability to distribute and administer 10,000 doses per week. We know this to be the case because the cities have collectively worked with Merced County to help stand up vaccination locations and support structures around vaccine distribution. Throughout this pandemic, the cities and County have worked collaboratively with community partners to better protect our residents and limit the spread of this deadly disease.

We have made significant progress toward preparing our residents for vaccination to protect the community and help move California out of this unprecedented pandemic. However, without an appropriate allocation of vaccine doses, we do not have the ability to carry out what we've been tasked with and what our constituents so desperately need.

Merced County residents are already at a disadvantage due to a shortage of healthcare services in the Central Valley. This is one of many reasons why our residents are at high-risk for COVID-19 and need to be treated equally to residents in other parts of the State. While we have not been made familiar with the formula used by the Department of Health and Human Services to distribute vaccine doses, it appears to be worsening long-standing healthcare inequities.

Thousands of Merced County residents have signed up to be vaccinated once doses are made available. As their elected representatives, it is our obligation to make every effort to ensure that they are treated equitably. In order to ensure the ability to handle any additional vaccination volume in the future, the cities and County have worked together to facilitate the proper training for qualified professionals who can administer the shots.

Merced County has proven that it can rapidly push out vaccines in a safe and responsible manner. Now, we need your help. We need a proper allocation of vaccine doses that will afford our residents the opportunity to protect themselves, their loved ones, and their community.

This is a critical time with so many of our residents falling victim to, and dying from, this disease. We hope you understand our situation and are willing to assist.

Sincerely,



Mayor Paul Creighton, City of Atwater



Mayor Juan Aguilar, Jr., City of Livingston



Mayor April Hogue, City of Dos Palos



Mayor Tom Faria, City of Los Banos



Mayor Pat Nagy, City of Gustine



Mayor Matthew Serratto, City of Merced

cc: *The Honorable Jim Costa, Member of the United States House of Representatives*
The Honorable Anna Caballero, Member of the California State Senate
The Honorable Adam Gray, Member of the California State Assembly