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March 23, 2015

Senator Richard D. Roth, Chair
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
Subcommittee 4 on State Administration and General Government
State Capitol, Room 5019
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Office of Emergency Services Budget Item – Hazardous Materials Fee

Dear Senator Roth:

The League of California Cities fully supports the development of a hazardous materials fee to fund regional emergency hazardous materials response teams throughout the state. It is our understanding that trailer bill language that would establish this funding stream has been prepared.

Such a funding stream is necessary in light of the dramatic increase in the transport of crude oil by rail into California in the past two years, in addition to the considerable routine transport by rail of other hazardous materials such as ethanol. The July 2014 report of the Interagency Rail Safety Working Group (which comprised a portion of the Updated Gap Analysis for Hazardous Material Transport by Rail in California) highlighted the fact that there are currently significant deficiencies in local emergency preparedness and response capabilities in the context of rail accidents. Establishing a hazardous materials fee for regional response teams will be an important step in addressing those deficiencies.

In addition, the League of California Cities strongly supports the proposed \$10 million allocation in the Governor's Proposed Budget to facilitate local agencies' acquisition of specialized hazardous materials vehicles and equipment, enhanced training and exercises, and covering costs associated with backfilling staff deployed on such training. This is consistent with the state's larger objective of developing a more robust overall response capability. Local agency first responders are often first on the scene of an accident, and can take action in the crucial initial hours, but particularly in instances of major accidents, state, regional, and local response teams will have to work in concert.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the League's position at (916) 658-8252.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Cromartie".

Tim Cromartie
Legislative Representative

cc: Senator Richard Pan
Senator Janet Nguyen