



Ricardo Lara

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California Legislature

June 11, 2012

Patrick O'Donnell, Chair
State Legislation Committee
333 W. Ocean Blvd., 14th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802

RE: AB 678 (Pan)

Dear Chairman Patrick O'Donnell and Members of the Committee:

I write in regards to Agenda Item 12-0467, discussion of AB 678 (Pan, 2011). Recently, it has come to my attention that the committee will be discussing the allocation of funds provided through AB 678. As the committee discusses AB 678, I respectfully urge the committee to continue to utilize funds provided through the legislation as originally intended. It was with great enthusiasm that I supported the passage of the bill as it will bring much needed relief to fire department budgets throughout the state.

As California's health system continues to deteriorate, the local fire department in its first response capacity participates in transporting Medi-Cal patients at an ever-increasing rate. Specifically, ambulance transports have increased statewide 13% from 1997 to 2006 and ambulance transports of Medi-Cal beneficiaries increased 19% from 2006 to 2009. Further, Medicare rates in California were reduced 10% in 2010, representing a reduction of \$35 million Statewide, thereby straining fire department budgets even more.

California's ambulances will provide approximately 3.1 million transports this year. Nearly 300,000 of those will be Medi-Cal patients, and up to half of whom will be transported by fire departments. Depending on the demographics the percentage of those patients can range from 10% to 35% of a fire department's total transport volume.

Clearly, the Long Beach Fire Department is vital in providing emergency transportation services to our constituents and it is my hope that the City of Long Beach will continue to support the work of their Fire Department by using funds provided through AB 678 as originally intended.

Sincerely,

Assembly Member, 50th District

