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Councilmember

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Councilmember

VILMA CUELLAR STALLINGS  
Councilmember

April 6, 2026

The Honorable Buffy Wicks  
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee  
1021 O Street, Suite 8220  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 262 (Caloza) California Individual Assistance Act.**  
**Notice of SUPPORT** *(As Amended April 3, 2025)*

Dear Assemblymember Wicks,

The City of Paramount is pleased to support AB 262 (Caloza), which would establish the California Individual Assistance Act within the Office of Emergency Services for the purpose of quickly providing assistance to California residents following the declaration of a local or state emergency that may not receive federal disaster assistance for individuals.

Under current law, the California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA) requires the Director of California's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) to provide financial assistance to local agencies for their personnel costs, equipment costs, and the cost of supplies and materials used during disaster response activities, incurred as a result of a state of emergency proclaimed by the Governor.

AB 262 would establish the California Individual Assistance Act as a grant program to provide financial assistance to local agencies, community-based organizations, and individuals for costs related to a disaster that may not be eligible for federal disaster assistance. The bill specifies that eligible "disasters" include fire, flood, storm, tidal wave or tsunami, earthquake, act of terrorism, epidemic, extreme heat or cold event, or other similar calamities that present a threat to public safety. The bill would require the CalOES Director to administer the funding under the California Individual Assistance Act.

We support the clarifying provision that allows the CalOES Director to prioritize CDAA when allocating funding to support local governments in rebuilding public facilities and infrastructure when impacted by disasters that do not qualify for the federal minimum damage threshold under the Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA). For California, the federal minimum damage threshold is \$72 million for disaster damages. For communities that do not have disaster damages that meet that threshold, they cannot

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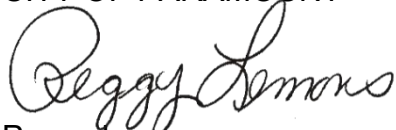
qualify for FEMA assistance. The California Seismic Safety Commission recently recommended this clarification based on the Ferndale Earthquake Sequence disaster, which caused significant damage to North Coast communities that did not meet the threshold for federal assistance.

We believe this bill would not impose significant costs to the state and would instead create the program structure necessary to mirror federal disaster assistance programs in state law. Upon future appropriations by the Legislature in healthier budget years, the state could direct funding for disaster assistance to serve as a backstop when federal aid is unavailable.

As a small, densely populated city with aging infrastructure and limited local revenue flexibility, Paramount is particularly vulnerable to the financial strain caused by disasters that fall below FEMA's federal damage threshold. The City has experienced severe storm events, localized flooding, extreme heat impacts, and infrastructure failures that require immediate response and recovery but do not qualify for federal assistance. For example, on April 18, 2000, a localized weather event known as a microburst struck Paramount and caused severe damage to mobile homes and surrounding property. These incidents place unexpected pressure on the City's General Fund and delay the repair of critical community assets such as streets, storm drains, and public facilities. AB 262 would provide Paramount with a much-needed safety net by creating a state-level pathway for individual and local assistance when federal support is unavailable, ensuring that residents and local agencies can recover more quickly and equitably from emergencies that still cause real harm despite not meeting FEMA's high threshold.

For these reasons, the City of Paramount is pleased to support AB 262 (Caloza). Please feel free to contact City Manager John Moreno at (562) 220-2225, if you have any questions. We thank you for your time and consideration.

CITY OF PARAMOUNT



Peggy Lemons  
Mayor

Cc: Honorable Congresswoman Nanette Barragan, 44th District  
Honorable Assemblymember Jose Luis Solache, 62<sup>nd</sup> District  
Honorable State Senator Lena Gonzalez, 33rd District  
Nicholas Cabeza, Public Affairs Manager, League of California Cities  
Jorge Morales, Legislative and Governmental Affairs Consultant, California Contract Cities Association