City of Riverside, California
Office of the Mayor
PATRICIA LOCK DAWSON

April 14, 2023

The Honorable Anthony J. Portantino
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
1021 O St, Room 2200
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 19 (Seyarto) – Anti-Fentanyl Abuse Task Force – As Amended 3/7/23 - SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Portantino,

On behalf of the City of Riverside, I write to express our support for SB 19, which would establish the Anti-Fentanyl Abuse Task Force to, among other things, collect and organize data on the nature and extent of fentanyl abuse in California and evaluate approaches to increase public awareness of fentanyl abuse.

Fentanyl is a potent, synthetic opioid drug that is approximately 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin as an analgesic. It is legally manufactured and distributed in the United States; however, fentanyl pharmaceutical products are often diverted via theft, fraudulent prescriptions, and illicit distribution by patients, physicians, and pharmacists. Illicitly manufactured fentanyl is a major contributor to fatal and nonfatal overdoses in California. It is often added to other drugs making them cheaper, more addictive, and more dangerous. In 2021, fentanyl was involved in over 83% of the 7,175 opioid-related deaths.

Fentanyl addiction is a severe public safety and public health issue that requires an organized response. SB 19 expands upon the State's efforts to combat the fentanyl crisis by establishing the Anti-Fentanyl Abuse Task Force. This task force will identify the resources necessary to respond and bring this epidemic under control.

For these reasons, the City of Riverside supports SB 19. If you have questions regarding the City's position, please contact Chekesha Gilliam, Intergovernmental Relations Officer at (951) 826-2419 or CGilliam@riversideca.gov.

Sincerely,

Patricia Lock Dawson
Mayor, City of Riverside

cc: Members and Consultants, Senate Appropriations Committee
        The Honorable Kelly Seyarto
        City of Riverside Legislative Delegation