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September 21, 2015

Governor Jerry Brown
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 27 (Hill) (as amended September 10, 2015) – SUPPORT

Dear Governor Brown:

We write to urge you to sign SB 27 by Senator Hill regarding the use of antibiotics in farm animals. We appreciate your staff and administration's efforts to craft amendments to the bill that addressed our concerns. We also appreciate Senator Hill's efforts to tackle this important public health issue. Thank you for standing on the side of public health and requesting improvements to the bill. The bill that passed the legislature represents a significant step forward in addressing the overuse and misuse of antibiotics in livestock production.

As you already know, antibiotic-resistant infections kill 23,000 people in this country alone and sicken millions. Experts warn that if we don't act now to stem the growth and spread of these infections, they could become more deadly than cancer by 2050. To stop the spread of drug-resistant bacteria, we need to end the overuse of antibiotics, and 70 percent of medically important antibiotics are sold for use on livestock. The Centers for Disease Control found in their 2013 report that "much of antibiotic use in animals is unnecessary and inappropriate and makes everyone less safe."

The bill heading to your desk curbs the regular use of antibiotics for prophylaxis on animals that are not sick and prohibits antibiotic use for growth promotion. Addressing both is critical to progress on addressing antibiotic overuse in livestock production. The bill also requires the California Department of Food and Agriculture to develop a monitoring program that collects information on antibiotic use in livestock, while making clear the agency's authority to access veterinary feed directives in service of the monitoring program. Finally, it puts antibiotic use under veterinary oversight and calls for stewardship guidelines and best management practices for the use of antibiotics in the livestock sector.

While much more remains to be done to address the public health crisis of antibiotic resistance, SB 27 represents significant progress beyond flawed federal policy and the status quo on antibiotic use in livestock. With your signature on SB 27, California will be at the forefront of efforts to reduce the misuse and overuse of antibiotics in livestock. Under your leadership, California is helping to protect public health and keep antibiotics working to protect our families when they are needed.

We appreciate your attention to the science behind this issue and to the concerns of our broad coalition of public health, medical, environmental, community, farm, and business voices. We respectfully request that you sign SB 27 into law so that we can start working with your administration on implementation right away.

Thank you again for your careful consideration of this critical public health issue.

Sincerely,

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