October 5, 2015

Governor Jerry Brown
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 27 (Hill) Antibiotics Use in Livestock – REQUEST SIGNATURE

Dear Governor Brown:

As experts in medicine, health, science, and policy, we are writing to inform you that we have removed opposition to, and are now in full support of SB 27 by Senator Hill, as it was amended on September 10 and is now before you. We request that you sign SB 27 into law.

We face a crisis of antibiotic resistance, which threatens humans and animals alike. At least 23,000 people die each year of resistant infections and millions more fall ill and suffer. Without urgent action, experts warn of a “post-antibiotic era,” where antibiotics do not work as well to treat infections, resulting in longer and more life-threatening illnesses -- and where medical miracles that depend on reliable antibiotics, like bone marrow and heart transplants, cancer chemotherapy, C-sections and kidney dialysis, can no longer be safely performed.

Our overuse of antibiotics helps to drive resistance. The practice of feeding antibiotics daily to animals when they are not clinically sick is an important contributor. Currently, 70% of all antibiotics of human importance nationwide are sold for use in livestock.

We support SB 27 as amended because it prohibits the regular use of antibiotics on livestock unless it is needed to treat sick animals, for medical procedures, or to control disease outbreaks. Antibiotics administered routinely to entire herds or flocks of animals at lower-than-therapeutic levels in their feed or water is more likely to promote antibiotic resistance. Ending such use is a big step forward. With this step, California will lead the nation on this issue.

Further, SB 27 requires the Department of Food and Agriculture to develop a monitoring program which collects information on antibiotic use on farms. Your office will have an important role to play in ensuring this program is robust and effective, as this information is key for evaluating progress and identifying trends in resistance and opportunities for reduction of use.

Please sign SB 27 to establish California as a national leader in curbing overuse of antibiotics in animals. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

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Cc: Senator Hill

*Title and affiliation for identification purposes only and may not represent the views of the organization