



CITY OF SAN DIEGO
COUNCILMEMBER STEPHEN WHITBURN
THIRD DISTRICT

December 4, 2023

Honorable Chair Nora Vargas
Board of Supervisors
San Diego County
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 335
San Diego, CA 92101

Re: Opposition to Delay of SB 43 to January 1, 2025

Dear Board of Supervisors:

As the Councilmember representing San Diego City Council District 3, I am writing to encourage the County of San Diego to implement Senate Bill 43 (SB 43) when it goes into effect on January 1, 2024, and not delay to January 1, 2025.

SB 43 was signed into law earlier this year and provides the first major update to the state of California's conservatorship laws in decades. SB 43 offers much needed intervention to people with severe substance use disorders and for those who cannot provide for their own basic personal safety or medical needs.

This legislation is of particular importance to District 3, as areas within the district, such as Downtown San Diego, have a high number of people experiencing homelessness, mental health and substance abuse issues that would benefit from the immediate use of county intervention to help them find permanent housing and other life changing solutions.

While the law allows for counties to delay implementation until 2026, San Diego County is currently in the midst of a public and mental health crisis among our homeless population, which will only increase if the implementation of legislation such as this one is delayed, and action is not taken to help our most vulnerable San Diegans better their living situations.

Residents in District 3 also feel the impacts of this behavioral health crisis and demand action to implement tools like SB 43 as soon as possible. These individuals are community members, family members and neighbors who deserve access to dignified health and civic care counties and hospitals are funded to provide. They should not be left to suffer repeated short-term holds for another year.

Law enforcement and health first responders from throughout San Diego County carry the weight of this broken system on their shoulders every day, and residents again pay the price by way of longer response times.

I respectfully ask for the County to not delay SB 43 implementation and to work with cities and other public safety and health partners to expand services to those that need them the most.

Our communities expect us to act now to address the challenges of mental health, addiction and homelessness. I look forward to our continued partnership in taking on these challenges together.

Sincerely,



Stephen Whitburn
Councilmember, District 3
City of San Diego

CC: Vice Chair Terra Lawson-Remer
Supervisor Joel Anderson
Supervisor Jim Desmond
Supervisor Elect Monica Montgomery Steppe
Helen Robbins Meyer, Chief Administrative Officer
Dr. Eric McDonald, Interim Agency Director