

TO: Workforce Investment Board

DATE: 09/14/06

FROM: WIB Staff

For Action

For Information

For Discussion

SUBJECT: Letter of Support – California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley’s Strategic Action Proposal to be submitted to the Governor.

PROPOSED MOTION(S): Approve the attached Letter of Support.

DISCUSSION: Governor Schwarzenegger signed an executive order in June 2005 that created the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley (Partnership). The Partnership is a public-private collaboration charged with developing a strategic action proposal for improving the region. The proposal encompasses actions over a ten-year period and will be submitted by October 31, 2006.

Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) are involved as “responsible implementers” for portions of the Partnership action plan in the Higher Education and Workforce Development portion of the proposal. There are two goals in the plan that WIBs will be asked to support and achieve:

- **Create a demand-driven workforce investment system that targets clusters: Agribusiness, including Food Processing, Agricultural Technology, and Biotechnology; (2) Manufacturing; (3) Supply Chain Management and Logistics; (4) Health and Medical Care; and (5) Renewable Energy.**
- **Develop a college-going culture in the San Joaquin Valley; more specifically, determine needed areas of expansion of vocational education.**

All the WIBs in the San Joaquin Valley have been asked to provide letters of support to accompany the Strategic Action Proposal submission.

ATTACHMENT(S):

Draft Letter of Support

DRAFT

**Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814**

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

The Merced County Workforce Investment Board is pleased to express our enthusiastic support for the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley (Partnership) and its Strategic Action Proposal.

Merced County is right in the middle of the San Joaquin Valley, and is truly representative of the entire Valley. The Valley is the eight-county region in the exact center of California. With over 60 cities and 3.7 million people, it is the fastest growing region in the state. But, by every social and economic measure, the San Joaquin Valley is the poorest region in the state.

Our valley has the worst, chronic unemployment in the nation. The poverty rates are among the highest in the nation, and are more than twice the national average. The per capita income in the San Joaquin is 32% less than the state average. Our air is dirty, in fact, the San Joaquin Valley is one of the two dirtiest air basins in the United States. Lastly, the region's education rates are among the lowest in the state.

The Merced County Workforce Investment Board is proud to be associated with the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley. We fully support the Partnership's proposal, and feel strongly that the many problems of today's San Joaquin Valley can be solved by the acceptance and application of the Partnership's Strategic Action Proposal.

Sincerely,