



September 13, 2023

The Honorable Jacqui Irwin
State Assembly
1021 O St, Room 6220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 531– The Behavioral Health Infrastructure Bond Act of 2024 (Irwin) –
SUPPORT (As Amended on September 11, 2023)**

Dear Assemblymember Irwin:

On behalf of the City of Santa Rosa, I write to express our support for your Assembly Bill (AB) 531, which would place a statewide bond measure on the March 2024 statewide ballot. Specifically, the bond is known as the Behavioral Health Infrastructure Bond Act of 2024, a \$6.3 billion bond measure. This crucial measure could provide funding for thousands of new community behavioral health beds and housing. We are proud to join with our partners across the state to support this important bond.

NATALIE ROGERS
Mayor

DIANNA MACDONALD
Vice Mayor

EDDIE ALVAREZ
VICTORIA FLEMING
JEFF OKREPKIE
CHRIS ROGERS
MARK STAPP

Cities recognize that for unsheltered individuals with severe behavioral health needs, access to a comprehensive care system can be essential to addressing their homelessness. That is why the City of Santa Rosa is eager to support these measures, as they take a comprehensive look at our existing behavioral health system and make targeted improvements.

While the recent point in time count shows improvement in the City's and overall County of Sonoma's homeless population, we need resources to assist those individuals and families in our community that need permanent housing and services. From the 2023 point in time count, the City of Santa Rosa has 1,160 homeless persons (30% decrease from 2022 count) living in our City. This represents 51% of the total County-wide count compared to 57% in 2022. As we know from our recent point in time count, 85% of those experiencing homelessness became homeless while living in Sonoma County.

These investments in the bond would further our shared state and local goals of addressing homelessness and allow more Californians to access desperately needed housing, treatment, and recovery resources. For these reasons, we are pleased to support AB 531 and thank you for your leadership on this most important issue. Should you have any questions, please contact our legislative advocate Alyssa Silhi with Renne Public Policy Group at (916) 505-4978.

Sincerely,

Natalie Rogers, Mayor