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For Immediate Release

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**CALIFORNIA'S LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS WELCOME
FLEXIBILITY AND POTENTIAL FEDERAL RESOURCES THROUGH
GOVERNOR'S BIRD FLU EMERGENCY DECLARATION**

Sacramento, CA - In response to Governor Newsom's declaration today of a [State of Emergency](#) due to the spread of H5N1 among livestock, Elsa Mendoza Jimenez, President of the County Health Executives Association of California (CHEAC) and Director of Health Services for the County of Monterey Health Department, issued the following statement:

"We appreciate Governor Newsom's action to provide flexibility and position California to request more federal resources in support of public health officials' ongoing effort to prevent spread of H5N1, also known as bird flu, in livestock and humans. On the front lines of preventing disease throughout California, local health departments are leading local response efforts to keep dairy and poultry farm workers and the community protected from contracting bird flu, including providing outreach and education to impacted businesses, proactively distributing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for at-risk individuals and businesses, administering antiviral medications, and conducting testing in local public health labs.

"It is important for the public to understand that this 'emergency' proclamation is a reason for vigilance, not fear. According to the California Department of Public Health, while H5N1 is impacting the state's dairy and poultry industries, the risk to the general public remains low.

"While many questions remain about the transmissibility of the virus, local public health officials urge all persons working with cows or poultry to wear PPE and take precautions to limit contact with the virus. However, there is clear scientific evidence that pasteurized milk and dairy products are safe to consume.

"Thanks to investments made through California's Future of Public Health initiative, California is better prepared now than we were before COVID-19 to combat emerging diseases. The recent bird flu cases are a reminder that California must continue to rebuild the capacity of our core public health workforce and infrastructure to quickly identify, respond, and contain public health threats."