



June 7, 2024

Mayor Vanessa Quiroz-Carter, District 2
Mayor Pro Tempore Maria Orozco, District 3
Council Member Casey Clark, District 5
Council Member Jimmy Dutra, District 6
Council Member Eduardo Montesino, District 1
Council Member Ari Parker, District 7
Council Member Kristal Salcido, District 4

City Hall, 275 Main St, Suite 400
Watsonville, CA 95076

RE: City Charter Amendments for Board & Commission Eligibility

Dear City Council Members,

We are writing to ask the Watsonville City Council to adopt the original subcommittee and staff charter language recommendation that expands board and commission appointments to all City residents. There is no legal barrier, either at the federal, state, or local level, to adopting this inclusive approach. Allowing this language on the ballot gives voters the option to decide how they want their city to operate and facilitate civic engagement.

Our city governments work best when we have equitable representation, and this requires access to serve on boards and commissions. Ventures, a nonprofit serving the Central Coast since 1989 and headquartered in Watsonville, is dedicated to building a shared and prosperous economic future for all. We work with thousands of Watsonville area residents who share with us the value of belonging and having input into the governance of the city. All are taxpayers and many are small business owners who through no fault of their own are unable to register to vote. Ensuring all voices are heard strengthens policy and decision-making, improving our local government's ability to meet the needs of our entire community.

Allowing voters to decide on expanding board and commission appointments to all residents of the city, regardless of voter registration, gives voters an option that creates a

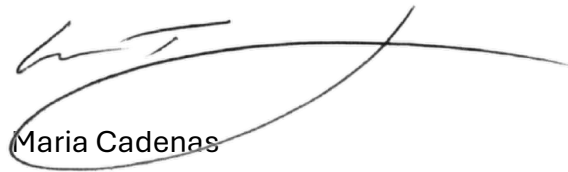
unified City and aligns the city charter to most chartered cities, state laws, and neighboring jurisdictions.

The currently proposed Measure 2 ballot language fosters division through the creation of a second-class commissioner with limited participation and is reminiscent of a dark history in our country and region where voter registration was used to limit access to governance for communities of color and women.

To provide voters with a genuine and comprehensive choice in November, we ask you to revisit the current proposed language, and instead revert to the language originally proposed through the subcommittee and staff. We also point out that board and commission appointments are made at the leisure of the City Council, just as the City Council retains all oversight of boards and commissions.

We ask you to allow voters to decide for themselves on the level of inclusivity the city should extend across all boards and commissions. Give voters the right to decide on whether they desire to create a more inclusive, representative, and vibrant city that benefits from the diverse perspectives and experiences of all its residents through its boards and commissions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maria Cadenas', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Maria Cadenas
Executive Director

cc: Tamara Vides, Interim City Manager, City of Watsonville
Irwin I. Ortiz, City Clerk, City of Watsonville
Board of Directors, Ventures