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STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF VERNON

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National Meat Association represents 18 companies operating in Vernon, California. We have recently become aware of the serious effort underway by legislators in the State of California to do away with this unique, 100-year-old industrial city. We are writing today to decry these efforts.

It does not make sense to dissolve Vernon! No other Californian city has faced forced disincorporation in this way. One of the last bastions in California for manufacturing, the city is currently home to approximately 1,600 companies that employ 50,000 people. Disincorporation would make Vernon an unincorporated area of Los Angeles County, threaten the unique success that the city has worked hard to obtain and put many of these jobs in jeopardy.

Nor does it make sense, either politically or economically, for Los Angeles to annex Vernon. Vernon's vitality is not an accident. It is the result of deliberate civic planning that is wholly unique to its situation. This exclusively industrial city is extremely efficient and effective at what it does. Absorption into another municipality would simply undermine the work that Vernon has done to be different.

Vernon has valuable city services, and provides jobs for residents of the surrounding municipalities. The immediate effect of either disincorporation or annexation would be an increase in energy costs and taxes for those businesses. Unfortunately, these would come not with an increase in public services, but rather a decrease as the monies for both emergency services and health services would be absorbed. Overall there would be a reduction in city responsiveness.

Business types that have thrived in Vernon have declined in other parts of the state. These businesses are in difficult, low margin industries, especially meatpacking/processing, which would suffer disproportionately. Coupled with cost increases, the loss could drive them from the state or out of operation altogether.

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