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To the Members of the Governance Subcommittee Meeting
California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM)

RE: For public statement during Governance Subcommittee Meeting on March 9, 2026

Dear Members,

I am writing on behalf of **Tribe Research**, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit incorporated in California in December 2024. Our mission is to develop a new class of cell-based medicines and an equipment line needed to manufacture them in decentralized, affordable, and equitable settings. As an early-stage organization without the resources to hire staff, we are currently a 100% volunteer-driven organization.

CONCERN: As a California nonprofit, we are eager to apply for CIRM funding. However, the current requirement that applicants must employ at least one W-2 employee at the time of application renders us ineligible (see CIRM Common Requirements and Definitions v4.9.25 #(1)(i)).

PROPOSED SOLUTION: We respectfully request that CIRM allow early-stage nonprofits to apply without a W-2 employee in place, with the employment requirement taking effect upon award—consistent with standard practice in NIH and DARPA programs.

JUSTIFICATION IN SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSED SOLUTION:

(1) Our experience submitting multiple NIH and DARPA scientific grant applications indicates that neither agency requires a W-2 employee at the time of application.
(2) Providing this flexibility would enable small, innovative California research organizations to compete on scientific merit, strengthen the state's innovation ecosystem, and expand future employment opportunities.

Thank you for considering this request. I would be glad to provide any additional documentation or governance materials that may assist the Board. Tribe Research is deeply aligned with CIRM's mission and eager to contribute to California's leadership in regenerative medicine.

Sincerely,
Parijat Bhatnagar, PhD