



RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES  
OF CALIFORNIA

January 30, 2019

The Honorable Anthony Rendon  
Speaker of the Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 219  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 72 (Assembly Budget Committee) – SUPPORT**

Dear Speaker Rendon:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), we are writing to express our support for Assembly Bill 72, authored by the Assembly Budget Committee, to make immediate appropriations relating to wildfire, drinking water, and other urgent statewide needs. RCRC is an association of thirty-six rural California counties, and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from those member counties.

RCRC strongly supports the State's immediate commitment to ensuring that local agencies in Butte and Lake Counties receive three years of property tax backfill due to the severity of their recent wildfire damage and the additional time those communities will need to rebuild and recover. Past fires in other areas, such as the 2017 Northern California wildfires, have shown that rebuilding can take several years, and those areas will likely continue to incur property tax losses for the foreseeable future as they work to recover from their devastating losses. Because of that slow rebuilding process, RCRC would also request that you consider adding Mendocino, Napa, and Sonoma Counties among the areas where local agencies will receive additional years of property tax backfill.

RCRC also supports the funding allocation for the emergency preparedness public awareness campaign, especially since many of the fatalities during the Camp Fire in Butte County were among the elderly population and RCRC's member counties generally include a high percentage of elderly and socioeconomically disadvantaged residents. Counties are committed to public education when it comes to disaster preparedness, and the State's support in such a campaign will be invaluable in future emergency events. RCRC would recommend that AB 72 be amended to specifically define "disadvantaged communities" throughout the language as those with a median

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household income less than 80 percent of the statewide average, as stated in Public Resources Code Section 75005.

Finally, RCRC continues to look for ways to provide safe, affordable drinking water to the communities in our counties, many of whom are completely dependent on groundwater resources. We are pleased to note the appropriation in Section 3 of the measure of \$10 million to provide funding to address urgent drinking water needs. We would recommend the following amendments to the language to ensure that non-profits are assisting disadvantaged communities, as defined below:

*Of the amounts appropriated in this item, \$10,000,000 shall be available to provide grants or contracts to public entities or nonprofit organizations to address urgent drinking water needs ~~in~~ of disadvantaged communities, as defined in Section 116275 of the Health and Safety Code, or local educational agencies in or serving disadvantaged communities, or nonprofits, including, but not limited to, provision of interim alternate drinking water supplies including bottled or hauled water, and emergency improvements or repairs to existing water systems, such as well rehabilitation or replacement, extension of service, consolidation projects, treatment systems, or critical operation and maintenance activities that are cost prohibitive considering the population and median household income of the community served by the water system.*

For the above reasons, RCRC supports AB 72. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at [mwarmerdam@rcrcnet.org](mailto:mwarmerdam@rcrcnet.org) or [sheaton@rcrcnet.org](mailto:sheaton@rcrcnet.org) or (916) 447-4806.

Sincerely,



STACI HEATON  
Regulatory Affairs Advocate



MARY-ANN WARMERDAM  
Senior Legislative Advocate

cc: Members of the State Assembly  
Members of the Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Committee