



RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES
OF CALIFORNIA

April 16, 2015

The Honorable Robert Hertzberg
Chair, Senate Governance and Finance Committee
State Capitol, Room 4038
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Senate Bill 239 (As amended March 23, 2015) – OPPOSE

Dear Senator Hertzberg:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I regret to inform you of our opposition to Senate Bill 239 as amended on March 23, 2015. As you know, SB 239 seeks to establish a new Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) process related to the extension of fire services, by contract or agreement, outside of a public agency's current boundaries. RCRC is an association of thirty-four rural California counties and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from those member counties.

Among the most troubling provisions of SB 239 is language that would require the consent and written agreement of recognized employee organizations that represent firefighters of the existing and proposed service providers to the proposed "change of organization," as newly defined by SB 239. SB 239 would, in effect, allow a "recognized employee organization" to veto a local governing board's decision to contract for fire services. It is the responsibility of duly elected public officials to determine the means necessary to protect the communities they represent – not a labor organization. RCRC is concerned about the precedent that would be set should SB 239 become law.

SB 239 would also increase local agency costs by requiring extensive new LAFCO proceedings relating solely to fire protection services. SB 239 would require the adoption of a resolution of application that includes the previously referenced "permission" of the employee organization(s), a public hearing, a detailed plan for services and a comprehensive fiscal analysis, among other things. RCRC believes that existing law and processes work well and that the provisions of SB 239 are unwarranted.

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In conclusion, RCRC believes that SB 239 would abrogate local authority, set a bad precedent, and unnecessarily increase costs on small, rural local agencies already under significant financial pressure. For these reasons, RCRC must oppose SB 239. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Mannion". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

KATHY MANNION
Legislative Advocate

cc: Members, Senate Governance and Finance Committee
Committee Consultant
Republican Consultant