



RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES
OF CALIFORNIA

April 18, 2018

The Honorable Hannah-Beth Jackson
Member, California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 2034
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Senate Bill 821 - SUPPORT

Dear Senator Jackson:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I am writing to express our support for your Senate Bill 821, which would authorize counties to automatically enroll residents into county-operated emergency notification systems, as well as allow residents to “opt-out” of receiving emergency alerts. RCRC is an association of thirty-five rural California counties, and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from each of those member counties.

As you are aware, current “opt-in” emergency notification systems are not adequate to notify residents during emergency situations. This became very clear during the devastating 2017 wildfires, which killed 44 people and injured 192 others in Northern California. Fires such as the Tubbs Fire and the Thomas Fire were fast-moving due to severe conditions, which included high winds and dry vegetation. The lack of a suitable, coordinated emergency notification system slowed evacuations during these fires and further endangered the safety of residents in those areas.

Specifically, SB 821 would authorize each county to develop a mechanism to access the contact information of resident accountholders through the records of a public utility or other agencies responsible for water service, waste and recycling services, or other property-related services in order to enroll residents in a county-operated public emergency warning system. SB 821 also specifies that any county that develops such a mechanism would be required to include procedures to enable any resident to “opt-out” of the emergency notification system and not to use the information gathered for any purpose other than for emergency notification. Recent emergencies in California reinforce the need for a robust emergency notification system, and SB 821 would ensure the safety of county residents during a disaster.

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For these reasons, RCRC is pleased to support your SB 821. If you should have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 447-4806.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tracy Rhine".

TRACY RHINE
Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Monique Limon, Member of the State Assembly
Members of the Senate Governmental Organization Committee
Consultant, Senate Governmental Organization Committee