

Rural County Representatives of California  
Annual Report  
2018



PHOTO CREDIT: Winner, RCRC's 2018 Rural Photo Contest  
Peggy Sells, Tuolumne County



## Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC)

is dedicated to representing the collective, unique interests of its membership, providing legislative and regulatory representation at the state and federal levels with the mission of protecting and enhancing the quality of life in rural California counties.

The RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected members of the Boards of Supervisors from its 36 member counties. RCRC staff work in partnership with the Board of Directors to deliver a rural perspective when legislation and regulations are being formulated in Sacramento and Washington, D.C.

### RCRC Represents:



**36**  
MEMBER  
COUNTIES



**4.3M**  
RESIDENTS



**56%**  
OF CA'S  
LAND MASS



**75%**  
U.S. FOREST  
SERVICE LAND IN CA



**75%**  
OF CA'S  
AVAILABLE WATER

### RCRC Welcomes Sonoma County to Membership

RCRC added Sonoma County to its membership in September bringing the total number of RCRC member counties to 36. Supervisor Lynda Hopkins serves as the Delegate on the RCRC Board of Directors representing Sonoma County.

"The voice of California's rural counties is stronger than ever, and we are excited to welcome Sonoma County to join our collective efforts in Sacramento and Washington, D.C.," said Rex Bohn, RCRC Chair and Humboldt County Supervisor.

"The growth RCRC has experienced over the recent past is a true testament to the value the organization provides to California's rural communities."

"Sonoma County has an urban core, but the vast majority of our landmass is rural in nature with an abundance of natural resources, preserved open space, and agricultural land," said Supervisor Hopkins. "The majority of my constituents are rural, and share the same concerns that other RCRC counties face. We're looking forward to working with other rural counties to advocate for our fair share of resources at the state and federal level."



## President's Message

2018 was another productive year for RCRC Board Members and staff! RCRC's mission includes protecting and enhancing the quality of life in California's rural counties, and after reflecting upon the year, I'm pleased with the work our team has accomplished in support of that mission.

We realized a number of key legislative and regulatory wins for California's rural counties. In 2018, we continued to expand our services and offerings to RCRC member counties, and our voice within the capital community and throughout the state is stronger than ever.

In addition to our ongoing legislative and regulatory advocacy efforts at the state level, last year the governmental affairs team focused on growing our federal advocacy program, resulting in full governmental affairs services to RCRC member counties. On the economic development front, we officially launched our strategic scope of work, addressing three economic development foundational areas of impact, and three industry-specific areas of impact. RCRC staff continues to employ strategic public advocacy efforts with RCRC Board Members, legislators, key stakeholders, and industry partners to support the organization's legislative and economic development goals, further positioning RCRC as the foremost expert in rural California issues.

I am grateful to our Board of Directors, and continue to be proud of the work that we accomplish on behalf of California's rural counties. I hope you'll find this annual report informative as it provides a summary of some – but certainly not all – of the issues addressed and programs engaged in by RCRC throughout the year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Greg Norton".

**Greg Norton**

*President and CEO*

## Key 2018 Legislative Wins

### **RCRC Sponsored Legislation: Assembly Bill 2717 (Lackey) & Assembly Bill 2727 (Flora)**

RCRC sponsored two measures in the 2017-18 Legislative Session. AB 2717 would have addressed municipal responsibilities for local enforcement of cannabis regulatory functions, and AB 2727 would have provided a personal income tax credit to firefighters who incur personal costs associated with serving as a firefighter. Both measures were unsuccessful in gaining passage.

### **Senate Bill 901 (Dodd)**

Due to RCRC staff's advocacy efforts, the Legislature enacted SB 901, which includes vital components that are essential to begin the process of returning California's forests to a natural, more resilient, fire-resistant state. This includes a five-year investment of \$200 million annually from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) for forest health programs totaling \$1 billion, and several provisions to aid and expedite forest health, vegetation management and fuels treatment programs.

### **Senate Bill 998 (Dodd)**

SB 998 relates to public water systems requirements that supply water to more than 200 service connections. Initially, SB 998 required local health departments "to determine whether discontinuation of residential service poses a grave threat to the health and safety of the residents." Senator Dodd accepted RCRC and CSAC's proposed amendments to remove that provision.

### **Senate Bill 1459 (Cannella)**

RCRC was instrumental in the enactment of SB 1459, which creates a one-time provisional licensing mechanism to allow the legal cannabis industry to continue operating while current backlogs in the state and local licensing process are addressed.

### **Secure Rural School (SRS) Payments**

Congress enacted a comprehensive 2018 federal spending plan, which included the reauthorization of two years of SRS payments for Fiscal Year 2017 and Fiscal Year 2018. This reauthorization provides California counties approximately \$26 million annually, of which nearly half will be forwarded to rural schools, and the other half for road maintenance.

### **Federal Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) Program**

Congress approved a \$530 million appropriation for Federal PILT - a \$65 million increase over 2017 funding levels. Much of the reason for the significant increase is due to a lack of SRS payments prior to 2017. The complex Federal PILT calculation formula accounts for an absence in SRS payments, and compensates counties for the loss of local property tax dollars when private land is converted into federal ownership.



### **Fiscal Year 2018 Spending Omnibus Package**

This package established new tools for active forest management, including vital categorical exclusions and extensions of the maximum length of stewardship contracts, as well as a comprehensive wildfire funding fix that gives the USDA Forest Service access to an additional \$2.25 billion in budget authority beginning in 2020. RCRC has been advocating for these changes for several years.

### **D-RiSC Mutual Aid**

RCRC staff advocated for appropriation of \$100 million in the State Budget from the State General Fund for the Office of Emergency Services to increase firefighters' attack on megafires and other major disasters in California. While the Legislature did not approve the full \$100 million, an appropriation of \$25 million in budget investments is now slated for California's Mutual Aid System.

### **Senate Bill 1383 (Lara)**

RCRC has been engaged with the SB 1383 proposed mandatory organics diversion regulations, and was successful in delaying implementation of the residential diversion requirement in RCRC's low population counties (under 70,000) and other rural areas (less than 50 people per square mile). The California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) also plans to accept RCRC's staff suggestion for the upcoming organics regulations to have an exemption for residential food waste collection above the 4,500 elevation (bear habitat). This will mostly impact areas in Placer and El Dorado Counties. CalRecycle also plans to recommend in their 2020 review of the progress towards the goal of the SB 1826 commercial organic waste diversion requirement on extending RCRC's low population counties exemption from 2020 to 2025.

### **California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Budget Package**

RCRC staff was instrumental in a \$195 million allocation to CAL FIRE for forest health related expenditures in the final 2018-19 State Budget Package. A portion of the funding is specifically directed to local agencies, such as counties, for fire prevention and forest restoration work around communities.

### **2018 Farm Bill**

This bill amends the definition of "rural area" to provide that a city or town that has a population of up to 50,000 inhabitants is eligible for guaranteed loans in the rural broadband program. It also expands the definition of "rural" and "rural area" up to 50,000 for an area to be eligible for loan guarantees for water, wastewater, and essential community facilities. This was one of the priority changes that RCRC was seeking in the 2018 Farm Bill discussions, and creates the possibility of increasing the population numbers for other sections of the bill in the future.

## Cap-and-Trade Program

The Legislature passed a Cap-and-Trade Expenditure Plan allocating funds from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF). The most critical of the allocations to RCRC member counties include:



**\$195 million to CAL FIRE** for forest health, fire prevention, fuels reduction, and prescribed fire projects.



**\$25 million to CalRecycle** for waste diversion programs.



**\$25 million to the California Office of Emergency Services** for local fire response efforts.

The Cap-and-Trade Program continues to generate more than \$2 billion annually for use in greenhouse gas emissions reduction programs, and RCRC will continue to advocate throughout 2019 for use of those dollars in programs that benefit rural California communities.



Senator Mike McGuire (D-Healdsburg) and RCRC Chair Rex Bohn (Humboldt) join firefighters, fire chiefs, and other state and community leaders at D-RiSC press conference urging the state to increase mutual aid funding to protect California's communities from natural disasters.

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As a member of Disaster Readiness for Safer Communities (D-RiSC), RCRC helps represent California's fire chiefs, firefighters, and local governments to improve our response network in the events of disasters such as our state's increasing incidence of wildfire and mudslide destruction. We continue to advocate for a modernized Mutual Aid System to increase proactive response and preparedness throughout California.

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## Fighting for Local Funding

### State Budget

The 2018-19 State Budget Package touted maintaining a balanced budget while preserving the state's core achievements, including TK-12 education, higher education, strengthening infrastructure, and paying down debts and liabilities. Furthermore, two key federal land payment programs were authorized and funded by Congress in 2018.

### Key Issues and Changes Affecting RCRC Member Counties Included:



\$15.4 million General Fund to partially fund a shortfall in county administration for the In-Home Supportive Services program.



\$96 million from various funds for forest health and wildfire prevention activities, including \$26 million to CAL FIRE for fuels reduction projects and \$2.3 million for programs to encourage the development of an innovative wood products market in California.



\$36.3 million to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to expand its Watershed Improvement Program.



Two-year reauthorization of funding under the Federal Secure Rural Schools Program.



\$133.3 million to continue activities associated with the regulation of both medical and adult use commercial cannabis activities. While no new funding was allocated for environmental enforcement, both the State Water Resources Control Board and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife continued fee-funded environmental enforcement and permitting activities throughout the year.



\$644,000 for the State's Payment in Lieu of Taxes program.



Continuing a modest amount of additional monies for state fairs.



Language to address the need for additional resources to provide safe drinking water for underserved, largely rural communities dependent on groundwater.

## Preserving the Quality of Life in Rural California

### 2018 Farm Bill

Approximately every five years, Congress establishes agricultural, food, and rural policy in an omnibus Farm Bill. The 2018 Farm Bill was enacted in the last weeks of the 115th Congress. The final agreement preserves much of the status quo for farm policy and rural America. In a victory for RCRC, the 2018 Farm Bill liberalizes the eligibility for rural communities to obtain access to several programs, including revisions to the definition of “rural area” to provide that a city or town that has a population of up to 50,000 inhabitants is eligible for guaranteed loans in the rural broadband program, and expansion of the definition of “rural” and “rural area” up to 50,000 for an area to be eligible for loan guarantees for water, wastewater, and essential community facilities.

In addition, the 2018 Farm Bill prioritizes funding for water and wastewater facility projects in communities with populations of 10,000 or less. This is intended to expand access to rural loan guarantee and grant programs for rural counties on critical projects related to rural broadband and water management. The 2018 Farm Bill also includes provisions to end the federal prohibition on industrial hemp, and allows states and tribes to regulate production of hemp.

### Safe Drinking Water

Originally introduced as Senate Bill 623 by Senator Bill Monning (D-Carmel), this measure proposed the concept of establishing a “safe and affordable drinking water fund” to provide ongoing grants, loans, or services to assist communities who cannot afford to operate and maintain a reliable water system on their own. The policy conversation was further advanced when Governor Brown included this concept in the 2018-19 State Budget. While neither SB 623 nor the Governor’s proposal advanced in 2018, this concept remains in discussion among water stakeholders. Many of these communities are in RCRC member counties, and absent a statewide solution, counties are looked upon as the provider (i.e. funder) of last resort in

meeting the needs of their communities. RCRC will continue to work with Senator Monning and others in identifying a sustainable solution to these unmet needs.

### Bay-Delta Water Quality Plan

Throughout 2018, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) continued to work on the development of the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan update for the Lower San Joaquin River and Southern Delta, and an accompanying Substitute Environmental Document. In December, following a nine-year process in which the SWRCB studied and analyzed options, conducted public outreach and workshops, and reviewed more than 1,400 comment letters, the SWRCB took action on a proposal that could require significant reductions in water diversions in the San Joaquin Valley. The proposal also included caveats setting the stage for continued development and possible adoption of Voluntary Stewardship Agreements (VSA) in that region, which may ultimately reduce impacts to agricultural and urban users. RCRC supports the use of VSAs as an adaptive ecosystem approach to meeting the needs of the San Joaquin tributaries, the Delta and the communities that depend on a healthy, sustainable river system. The next deadline for assessing the progress is March 2019 with final resolution anticipated in December 2019. RCRC continues to monitor and participate in the regulatory and litigation developments that are expected.



PHOTO CREDIT:  
Marilyn Boettger,  
Alpine County





PHOTO CREDIT: Justin Wages, Placer County

## Groundwater and the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

Work progressed to various degrees in 2018, as local entities formed their respective Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) and began formulating plans to achieve sustainability in their basin(s) of responsibility. In November, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) released Draft Basin Boundary Modifications resulting from requests by local agencies to modify basins based upon scientific or jurisdictional criteria. The next major deadline takes effect in January 2020, when GSAs in high priority basins are required to provide Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) to DWR for approval.

In 2018, there were also a number of related developments and policy conversations affecting groundwater management. These have included legislative and regulatory proposals addressing

when recharging groundwater basins may constitute a “beneficial use” of water, and judicial developments regarding the application of the “public trust doctrine” to groundwater use decisions.

## Disadvantaged Communities

RCRC continued to ensure that the proper definition of “disadvantaged communities” (DACs) was used in legislation in an effort to remain equitable to California’s rural counties. Many proposals initially used a definition developed by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) to allocate Cap-and-Trade dollars from the GGRF, which disqualifies 27 of California’s rural counties from accessing funds specifically directed for DACs. RCRC advocated successfully to ensure that more equitable definitions were used for proposals not related to GGRF funding allocations.

## Public Warning Systems

Another component of the Legislature’s response to wildfires this year was a focus on local public warning systems. Several bills were signed into law by Governor Brown intended to increase the number of residents notified in emergency situations. RCRC was a leading supporter of Senate Bill 821 (Jackson), which allows counties to enroll residents into its emergency warning system utilizing account holder information from public utility records. Most residents are unaware that they must sign up to receive emergency alerts from their county in order to be informed in cases of emergencies or natural disasters. This bill will allow counties to warn all residents of impending danger without requiring action by each individual.

RCRC also supported Senate Bill 833 (McGuire), which requires the development of new statewide guidelines for public warning systems, and an annual training for emergency managers on the new protocols. Creating standards based on best practices for early warning systems, and including all methods of notification such as landline telephones, radio, television, and wireless technology, further increases the ability of safe evacuations for even the most remote county residents.



## Stewarding California's Natural Resources

### Federal Forest Reform/Wildfire Funding

This year's federal Fiscal Year 2018 Spending Omnibus Package included a long sought-after fix for "fire borrowing," the USDA Forest Service's (USFS) budget scheme of borrowing from other forest management programs to fund fire suppression activities. Beginning in 2020, the USFS will have \$2.25 billion of new budget authority, which will increase by \$100 million each year through 2027. The package also included several important forestry reforms, including categorical exclusions for wildfire resilience projects and an increase of the maximum for stewardship contracts from 10 years to 20 years. RCRC has advocated in favor of these reforms for several years as part of a common sense approach to reducing the effects and severity of wildfires in California.

### Senate Bill 901

This year, Governor Brown signed SB 901 (Dodd), a comprehensive forest health bill aimed at reducing future wildfire risk and improving the condition of California's forests and wildlands. Championed largely by Assemblymember Brian Dahle (R-Bieber) and Assemblymember Jim Wood (D-Healdsburg), and strongly supported by RCRC, the final legislation included several components to help manage and restore the state's forest and wildlands, including easing regulatory burdens for forest management projects, and extending contracts for certain biomass facilities, as well as a \$1 billion investment from the GGRF over the next five years for forest health programs.

### Forest Management and Tree Mortality

While tree die-off due to pest infestation remains a concern in California, the state has expanded its attention to the general health and management of California's forests and vegetation in the wake of some of the most devastating wildfires in California history. RCRC has been involved in efforts to address fuel loading, overgrown forests and vegetation, wildfire prevention, and public health and safety risks posed by the current condition of California's forests.




PHOTO CREDIT:  
Cynthia Soszka, Nevada County





PHOTO CREDIT: Charlie Phillips, Mariposa County

## Providing the Rural Perspective on Statewide Regulations

### Solid Waste

In 2018, the RCRC and its Environmental Services Joint Powers Authority (ESJPA) continued to focus on Senate Bill 1383 (Lara), legislation mandating organics diversion. SB 1383 established specified targets for reducing organic waste in landfills, requiring 50 percent diversion of organics from landfills by 2020, and 75 percent by 2025. CalRecycle is required to adopt regulations to meet the waste reduction goals. RCRC has been engaged with regulators this past year and was successful in delaying implementation of the residential diversion requirement in certain rural counties. However, there are many remaining concerns with implementation of the proposed regulations that RCRC, along with other stakeholders, will continue to effectuate changes. CalRecycle anticipates commencement of the formal regulatory process in January 2019, and expects adoption by the end of the year. While the regulations will not take effect until 2022, adopting them early provides the regulated entities time to implement the necessary budgetary, contractual, and other program changes.

### Cannabis Enforcement Ad Hoc Committee

In 2018, the RCRC Board of Directors formed a Cannabis Enforcement Ad Hoc Committee to address the proliferation of cannabis grows and examine the best ways to enforce a county's policy. Supervisor Matt Kingsley (Inyo) was appointed to serve as Chair, with Supervisors Doug Teeter (Butte), Lee Adams (Sierra), Geri Byrne (Modoc), Randy Fletcher (Yuba), and Jack Garamendi (Calaveras) rounding out the committee's membership.

The committee convened four meetings, and heard from a variety of stakeholders, including industry leaders, various municipal personnel, state agency representatives, and experts from Oregon. The committee focused on the options and tools that rural counties have to better enforce a county's cannabis regulatory scheme, as well as enforce a county's ban on commercial cannabis activities. The committee is slated to report its findings to the RCRC Board of Directors in January 2019.

## The General Election of 2018

During the November 6, 2018 General Election, Californians voted on 11 statewide ballot measures. Several measures were impactful to rural counties, including Propositions 3, 5, 6, and 11. Proposition 3 would have issued a total of \$8.3 billion in bonds for a number of existing water-related programs. Proposition 5 would have changed the parameters for property tax base year value transfers. Proposition 6 would have repealed recent increases in taxes and fees on motorists and dedicated those monies for road repair and transportation funding purposes. Proposition 11 addressed the meal and rest periods of private sector ambulance crews.

**The RCRC Board of Directors adopted “Support” positions on Proposition 3 and Proposition 11; however, Proposition 3 was rejected statewide with 50.7 percent of the vote, and Proposition 11 passed with nearly 60 percent of the vote. The RCRC Board of Directors adopted an “Oppose” position on Proposition 5, which was rejected statewide with 59.8 percent of the vote, and an “Oppose” position on Proposition 6, which was rejected statewide with 56.8 percent of the vote.**

With the results of the November General Election, Democrats now enjoy supermajorities in both State Legislative chambers. Specifically, the Democrats hold 60 of the 80 seats in the State Assembly, while holding 29 of the 40 seats in the State Senate. Having more than a two-thirds majority in both houses allows Democrats to increase and/or impose new tax levies, place constitutional amendments on the ballot, and adopt governing rules of each house with no input or assistance from Republicans.

Nowhere is the anticipation greater from the General Election than what decisions confront Governor Gavin Newsom. Many expect a noticeable turn in both the substance and style of governance vis-à-vis former Governor Jerry Brown. Despite Governor Newsom’s early suggestions that he will govern in the model of former Governor Brown, he is likely to have a number of bills placed on his desk that had been previously vetoed or dramatically reshaped by previous governors. Legislators and key interest groups have expectations that these measures will now be signed into law.

California’s voters saw the defeat of five House Republicans (Representatives Denham, Valadao, Knight, Rohrbacher, and Walters), and the Democrats gain of two seats previously held by Republicans (Representatives Royce and Issa). This contributed to the Democrats regaining control of the House of Representatives. While Republicans improved their position in the U.S. Senate, divided government is likely to lead to very limited success in passing legislation in the 116th Congress.





**"The teamwork and commitment demonstrated by our staff is the ultimate reason RCRC is recognized by key stakeholders and industry leaders as the foremost expert on rural California issues."**

***Greg Norton, President and CEO***

## 2018 President's Award



**Carmel Angelo**

Presented during RCRC's Annual Meeting each September, RCRC's President's Award was established to acknowledge individuals that go above and beyond their everyday roles to further advance the cause of rural counties.

Carmel Angelo, Mendocino County Executive Officer received the 2018 RCRC President's Award for her efforts in helping advocate and champion a number of public policy issues on behalf of California's rural counties, including creating a local and regional approach to addressing cannabis cultivation, working to have better deployment of broadband in rural areas, and ensuring access to health care in rural communities. In addition to her role with Mendocino County, Ms. Angelo is extremely active in the California Association of County Executives, sharing her expertise with other members of the county family.

"In addition to Ms. Angelo consistently providing RCRC staff and Board Members wise counsel on a number of public policy areas, she is always willing to do the work needed to either pass or defeat legislation that is impactful to California's rural counties as a whole," said Greg Norton, RCRC President and CEO. "We're grateful for her dedication, and are pleased to provide the 2018 award to a true champion and advocate for California's rural communities."

## 2018 Rural Leadership Awards



**Assemblymember  
Brian Dahle**

Assemblymember Brian Dahle has been a longtime champion for rural counties, and was recognized in 2018 for his role in the enactment of SB 901 (Dodd), which provides \$1 billion over the next five years for work to improve the condition of the state's forests.



**Assemblymember  
Jim Wood**

Assemblymember Jim Wood has supported a wide range of policy issues impacting rural counties, including AB 1919 which helps end residential price gouging in the wake of a declared state emergency. Assemblymember Wood also strongly supported SB 901 to ensure critical financial resources are available to restore forest health.



## Economic Development

**RCRC's mission includes protecting and enhancing the quality of life in California's rural counties.**

In addition to providing legislative and regulatory representation at the state and federal levels, RCRC has invested significant time and resources into developing an economic development platform for the benefit of its member counties.

In June, Barbara Hayes joined the RCRC team as Chief Economic Development Officer, and quickly developed an economic development agenda and program of work that addresses three economic development foundational areas of impact, and three industry-specific areas of impact.



Greg Norton, RCRC President and CEO, and Trish Kelly, Valley Vision Managing Director at the 2018 California Economic Summit in Santa Rosa, CA.

## Economic Development Foundation

### Resource Development

Identifying or creating resources that promote and benefit RCRC member counties. Could include the identification of public programs that provide financial and/or technical assistance; development of resources, such as county economic profiles that support local economic development efforts; or identification and highlighting of local projects for private investment opportunities.

### Workforce Development

Bringing together workforce development partners at the federal, state, and local levels, industry partners, and philanthropic organizations to identify and solve workforce issues such as, training, recruitment, curriculum development, and others that impede job creation. Partners include all workforce development and training entities, as well as education representatives from TK-12 to higher education.

### Business Development

Participate in organizations and attend targeted industry conferences to promote rural California, resulting in both foreign and domestic business expansion, location, and/or retention opportunities for RCRC member counties. In all cases, organization membership and industry conference participation will be leveraged with RCRC member economic development partners to extend presence and reach of network.



## Industry-Specific Economic Development

RCRC has selected the following industry-specific areas of focus because of the immediate need and greatest benefit that would result to residents, businesses, and economies of our member counties:

### Forest Resiliency

Unprecedented levels of tree mortality combined with many years of drought conditions have resulted in disastrous fires harming the environment, wildlife, residents and businesses within our member counties. Work is underway by RCRC that would substantially alleviate future fire danger and restore wildlife habitats and natural watersheds while also creating opportunities for substantial investment and job creation that would revitalize rural economies. Together with key partners, RCRC has convened subject matter experts on forests, the environment, economic development, workforce development and others to establish an action plan to create a more resilient forest ecosystem in California.

### Rural Broadband Deployment

High-speed broadband availability in rural California is one of the most critical missing infrastructure components. Its absence often precludes unserved and underserved communities from participating in the 21st Century economy. High-speed broadband provides essential benefits by allowing increased economic and trade opportunities for small to medium-sized businesses, access to medical care and educational opportunities, enhanced public safety, and improving overall quality of life. RCRC is exploring methods of making “speed of commerce” service to rural California a reality.

### Infrastructure

Many communities in rural California are in desperate need of infrastructure upgrades to better serve their residents and businesses but don’t have the resources, financial or otherwise, to research, apply, and implement these upgrades. RCRC is exploring programs and innovative funding options to allow for project pooling and access to multiple funding sources that may reduce existing barriers to entry for rural communities.

## Member Resources and External Affairs

RCRC's external affairs program was established to supplement and advance the advocacy efforts of the Governmental Affairs team.

The main objectives of RCRC's external affairs strategy are:

- ▶ To increase RCRC's visibility, profile, and awareness with the California Legislature, state and local media representatives, and RCRC member counties.
- ▶ To position RCRC as the rural county thought leader, and "voice" for rural county issues in California.
- ▶ To support and advance legislative and regulatory advocacy efforts at the state and federal levels.
- ▶ To educate urban-focused media regarding the efforts and contributions of rural counties, in turn, becoming the media "go-to" organization for rural county-related issues.



### Earned Media

RCRC's media efforts have resulted in hundreds of placements in print, online, and broadcast publications and outlets throughout the state, and helped to raise the profile of RCRC members and issues. From press releases and opinion editorials, to letters to the editor and Barbed Wire articles, RCRC's earned media efforts help amplify the rural county perspective in both Sacramento and Washington, D.C.

### The Barbed Wire

Distributed weekly, The Barbed Wire highlights the latest state and federal legislative and regulatory news impacting California's rural counties. The Barbed Wire has become a trusted source for rural media outlets, as well as a clearinghouse for resources and opportunities available to California counties. The Barbed Wire, RCRC press releases, opinion editorials, letters to the editor, and all earned media can be found on the "News" page of the website. Additionally, readers can subscribe to The Barbed Wire by entering their email in the "Sign Up For News" box on the RCRC homepage.

### Social Media

RCRC maintains Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram social media platforms, and regularly interacts and engages with legislators and staff, local government, media representatives, stakeholders, and organizational

partners. With a combined reach of nearly 7,000 followers and subscribers, RCRC's advocacy efforts are supported by a network of secondary platforms and deputized messengers.

### The Rural Rundown Podcast

In an effort to further supplement the dissemination of information to RCRC members, media, policymakers, stakeholders, and rural California residents, the RCRC External Affairs team developed and launched a podcast this year. The Rural Rundown podcast explores legislative and regulatory issues impacting California's rural counties, and features commentary and interviews from individuals committed to improving the quality of life in rural California.

### Website

RCRC's website provides an up-to-date resource for members, media, legislators and staff, housing RCRC's advocacy letters, Board-adopted Policy Principles, reports, The Barbed Wire, press releases and news clips, and descriptions and positions on the myriad of issues impacting California's rural counties. The website also serves as a portal for resources and opportunities related to current events and hot topics, such as marijuana/cannabis, wildfires, water, and tree mortality issues.

## Executive and Legislative Roster



**Greg Norton,**  
*President and CEO*



**Lisa McCargar,**  
*Chief Financial Officer*



**Craig Ferguson,**  
*Vice President  
Business Operations*



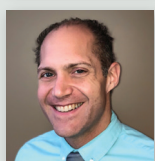
**Paul A. Smith,**  
*Vice President  
Governmental Affairs*



**Justin Caporusso,**  
*Vice President  
External Affairs*



**Barbara Hayes,**  
*Chief Economic  
Development Officer*



**Arthur Wylene,**  
*General Counsel*



**Mary-Ann  
Warmerdam,**  
*Senior Legislative  
Advocate*



**Tracy Rhine,**  
*Legislative Advocate*



**Staci Heaton,**  
*Regulatory Affairs  
Advocate*



**Mary Pitto,**  
*Regulatory Affairs  
Advocate*



**Maggie Chui,**  
*Governmental Affairs  
Coordinator*

**"It was another productive year for RCRC Board Members and staff! RCRC's mission includes protecting and enhancing the quality of life in California's rural counties, and after reflecting upon the year, I'm pleased with the work our team has accomplished in support of that mission."**

*Greg Norton, President and CEO*





County of the Chair Meeting, Humboldt County.



## RCRC Celebrates Mary Pitto's Contribution to California's Rural Counties

RCRC recognized Mary Pitto, RCRC Regulatory Affairs Advocate, for her years of dedicated service to California's

rural counties. Ms. Pitto officially retired from RCRC at the end of the year, capping off 16 years with the organization.

In addition to her regulatory portfolio on behalf of RCRC, Ms. Pitto served as Program Manager for the Rural Counties' Environmental Services Joint Powers Authority (ESJPA) for more than 15 years. Along with RCRC and the ESJPA, Ms. Pitto received recognition and resolutions from Assemblymember Frank Bigelow (R – O'Neals), the California Department of Conservation, and the CalRecycle.

"I could go on and on about the great work Mary has accomplished on behalf of California's rural counties over the years," said Greg Norton, RCRC President and CEO. "However, her kindness and generosity of spirit are what we're going to miss most around the office. We wish her health and happiness as she transitions into retirement."

## 2018 RCRC Board of Directors

County	Delegate
Alpine	David Griffith
Amador	Brian Oneto
Butte	Doug Teeter
Calaveras	Jack Garamendi
Colusa	Denise Carter
Del Norte	Gerry Hemmingsen
El Dorado	Michael Ranalli
Glenn	John Viegas
Humboldt	Rex Bohn
Imperial	Michael Kelley
Inyo	Matt Kingsley
Lake	Jim Steele
Lassen	Aaron Albaugh
Madera	David Rogers
Mariposa	Kevin Cann
Mendocino	Carre Brown
Merced	Daron McDaniel
Modoc	Geri Byrne
Mono	Stacy Corless
Napa	Diane Dillon
Nevada	Dan Miller
Placer	Jim Holmes
Plumas	Kevin Goss
San Benito	Anthony Botelho
San Luis Obispo	John Peschong
Shasta	Les Baugh
Sierra	Lee Adams
Siskiyou	Michael Kobseff
Sonoma	Lynda Hopkins
Sutter	Larry Munger
Tehama	Bob Williams
Trinity	John Fenley
Tulare	Kuyler Crocker
Tuolumne	Randy Hanvelt
Yolo	Matt Rexroad
Yuba	Randy Fletcher



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