



March 8, 2018

The Honorable Mike McGuire
Member, California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5061
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Senate Bill 833 – SUPPORT

Dear Senator McGuire:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I am writing to express our support for your Senate Bill 833, which would expand the State's red alert system to aid in evacuations during emergencies and reimburse local governments for implementation of the system. RCRC is an association of thirty-five rural California counties, and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from those member counties.

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

SB 833 addresses the need for such a red alert system by requiring the California Office of Emergency Services to ensure that each city or county office of emergency management is a registered federal Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) operator and that each office has functional WEA software (or State-sanctioned equivalent) and suitable ancillary equipment needed to operate the WEA system, as well as training on how to operate the system. RCRC strongly supports the provisions in SB 833 that require State reimbursement for local governments to implement the WEA system, particularly since many natural disasters such as high severity wildfires take place in economically disadvantaged counties that may have difficulty implementing such a system without reimbursement.

1215 K Street, Suite 1650, Sacramento, CA 95814 | www.rcrcnet.org | 916.447.4806 | Fax: 916.448.3154

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For the above reasons, RCRC supports your SB 833. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at sheaton@rcrcnet.org or (916) 447-4806.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Staci Heaton", with a stylized flourish at the end.

STACI HEATON
Regulatory Affairs Advocate

cc: Members of the Senate Governmental Organization Committee
Consultant, Senate Governmental Organization Committee
The Honorable Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, Member of the State Assembly
The Honorable Jim Wood, Member of the State Assembly
The Honorable Marc Levine, Member of the State Assembly