

**Rural County Representatives of California  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Wednesday, March 10, 2021 – 9:00 a.m.  
1215 K Street, Suite 1650 – Board Room  
Sacramento, CA 95814**

In accordance with Executive Orders N-25-20 and N-29-20, the March 10, 2021 RCRC Board of Directors meeting was held virtually.

**MINUTES**

**Call to Order, Determination of Quorum and Self Introductions**

Chair, Supervisor Stacy Corless, Mono County, called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. A quorum was determined at that time. Those present:

<b><u>Supervisor</u></b>	<b><u>County</u></b>
David Griffith	Alpine
Doug Teeter	Butte
Jack Garamendi	Calaveras
Denise Carter	Colusa
Gerry Hemmingsen	Del Norte
Lori Parlin	El Dorado
Paul Barr	Glenn
Rex Bohn	Humboldt
Michael Kelley	Imperial
Matt Kingsley	Inyo
EJ Crandell	Lake
Gary Bridges	Lassen
David Rogers	Madera
Miles Menetrey	Mariposa
Glenn McGourty	Mendocino
Daron McDaniel	Merced
Geri Byrne	Modoc
Stacy Corless	Mono
Chris Lopez	Monterey
Diane Dillon	Napa
Dan Miller	Nevada
Jim Holmes	Placer
Bob Tiffany	San Benito
John Peschong	San Luis Obispo
Les Baugh	Shasta
Lee Adams	Sierra
Michael Kobseff	Siskiyou
Mat Conant	Sutter
Bob Williams	Tehama
Dennis Townsend	Tulare

Kathleen Haff                      Tuolumne  
Randy Fletcher                      Yuba

**Absent**

Brian Oneto                      Amador  
Kevin Goss                      Plumas  
James Gore                      Sonoma  
Jeremy Brown                      Trinity  
Angel Barajas                      Yolo

**Others in Attendance**

Supervisor Terry Woodrow, Alpine County  
Supervisor Steve Madrone, Humboldt County  
Supervisor Marshall Long, Mariposa County  
Supervisor Ned Coe, Modoc County  
Supervisor Sue Hoek, Nevada County  
Supervisor Peter Hernandez, San Benito County  
Supervisor Mary Rickert, Shasta County  
Supervisor Larry Micari, Tulare County  
Patrick Blacklock, Yolo County  
Ed Horton, Placer County Water Agency  
Crystal Crawford, Ygrene Energy Fund  
Mark Scheffel, Ygrene Energy Fund  
Randy Hanvelt, Associated California Loggers  
Julie Tone, AT&T  
Carolyn Gallagher  
Daniel Lewis  
Stacey Tutt

**Staff in Attendance**

Greg Norton, President and CEO  
Lisa McCargar, Chief Operating Officer/Chief Financial Officer  
Craig Ferguson, Senior Vice President  
Paul A. Smith, Senior Vice President Governmental Affairs  
Barbara Hayes, Chief Economic Development Officer  
John Kennedy, Legislative Advocate  
Staci Heaton, Senior Regulatory Affairs Advocate  
Tracy Rhine, Senior Legislative Advocate  
Sarah Dukett, Legislative Advocate  
Sidd Nag, Legislative Advocate  
Arthur Wylene, General Counsel  
Maggie Chui, Senior Governmental Affairs Coordinator/Clerk of the Board  
Leigh Kammerich, Regulatory Affairs Specialist  
Milena De Melo, Controller  
Dorothy Poole, External Affairs Coordinator  
Layne Frederickson, IT Director

Elizabeth Jensen, Assistant Controller  
Sanjay Lee, Financial Analyst  
Anthony Rahill, Data and Program Development Manager  
Terrance Rodgers, Economic Development Officer  
Sarah Bolnik, Economic Development Officer  
Mary Pitto, Consultant

## **Pledge of Allegiance**

## **Review and Approval of the following Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

- a. January 13, 2021 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**
- b. February 10, 2021 Special Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

Chair, Supervisor Stacy Corless, Mono County, called for approval of the minutes from the January 13, 2021 Board of Directors Meeting and the February 10, 2021 Special Board of Directors Meeting.

**Supervisor Dan Miller, Nevada County, motioned to approve the minutes from the January 13, 2021 Board of Directors Meeting and the February 10, 2021 Special Board of Directors Meeting. Supervisor Michael Kobseff, Siskiyou County seconded the motion. Motion passed with all Supervisors present voting “Aye,” except as follows:**

**Not Voting: Butte County; Monterey County**

## **RCRC Chair’s Report**

Chair, Supervisor Stacy Corless, Mono County, welcomed supervisors to the RCRC Board of Directors meeting. Supervisor Corless announced that this will be President and CEO Greg Norton and Senior Vice President Governmental Affairs Paul A. Smith’s last RCRC Board of Directors meeting. Mr. Norton and Mr. Smith are retiring from RCRC effective March 26<sup>th</sup>. Still, Mr. Norton will serve as President of the Golden State Natural Resources (GSNR). RCRC staff Staci Heaton will be promoted to Acting Vice President Governmental Affairs. Supervisor Corless welcomed Patrick Blacklock who will assume the President and CEO position effective April 5<sup>th</sup>.

Supervisor Corless announced that RCRC staff is creating a RCRC Supervisor Handbook that will be distributed to members of the RCRC Board of Directors. Additionally, Supervisor Corless discussed the formation of a Past Chair Circle to aid new RCRC Board Members.

Supervisor Corless announced that the April RCRC Board of Directors meeting has been rescheduled from April 21<sup>st</sup> to April 28<sup>th</sup> due to the California State Association of Counties’ (CSAC) Legislative Conference taking place on the same day. To avoid scheduling conflict since a number of RCRC Board Members serve on CSAC, RCRC is rescheduling the meeting.

Supervisor Corless asked Chief Operating Officer/Chief Financial Officer Lisa McCargar to provide an update on the June RCRC Board of Directors meeting (June 17-19, 2021) taking place in Mono County, the County of the Chair. Ms. McCargar shared that planning is currently underway and more details will be forthcoming. In addition, Ms. McCargar noted that RCRC hopes to host the RCRC Annual Meeting in September as well as make an effort to host the December RCRC Board of Directors meeting in Merced County.

### **Member County Concerns and Issues**

Supervisor Denise Carter, Colusa County, shared her concern on per-day rental rates for migrant housing facilities. The rental rates, which are established by the state, has not change in a number of years even though cost have increased. Supervisor Carter asked for RCRC staff assistance on this matter.

Supervisor David Rogers, Madera County, voiced his concern regarding the *Davis v. Fresno Unified School District* case. Supervisor Rogers asked RCRC to consider signing-on an amicus curiae requesting the Supreme Court to review the decision.

Supervisor Mat Conant, Sutter County, spoke about a Federal Emergency Management Agency's floodplain management regulations issue in Sutter County.

Supervisor Michael Kelley, Imperial County, spoke about a tragic incident that occurred in Imperial County whereby a number of undocumented migrants were killed in a vehicle collision.

Supervisor Kelley also noted that Imperial County has been moved to the coronavirus (COVID-19) red tier.

Supervisor David Griffith, Alpine County, thanked Supervisor Stacy Corless (Mono County) and U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region Regional Forester Randy Moore for a productive meeting to discuss the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.

Supervisor Matt Kingsley, Inyo County, shared his appreciation of RCRC staff putting forth an amicus curiae in *City of Los Angeles v. County of Inyo, et al.* which concerns a California Environmental Quality Act challenge to Inyo County's initiation of eminent domain proceedings to acquire three properties owned by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

Supervisor EJ Crandell, Lake County, shared his concern regarding the correlation of vaccination administration and the COVID-19 tier system movement. Lake County recently made a breakthrough that would include tribal health administered vaccinations to Lake County's overall vaccination administration. Supervisor Crandell also shared his concern regarding a letter the Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) circulated regarding rate increases and shutoffs.

### **Public Comments**

None

## **President's Report**

Greg Norton, President and CEO, welcomed supervisors to the RCRC Board of Directors meeting. Mr. Norton asked for a moment of silence to honor Jerry O'Banion who recently passed away. O'Banion was a former member of the Merced County Board of Supervisors and previously served on the RCRC Board of Directors.

Mr. Norton echoed that this will be his last RCRC Board of Directors meeting as President and CEO of RCRC. Mr. Norton thanked RCRC Member Counties for their support throughout the years, and looks forward to serving RCRC Member Counties as President of GSNR. Mr. Norton also echoed that this will be Paul A. Smith's last RCRC Board of Directors meeting as he is retiring after nearly 16 years of service to RCRC. Staci Heaton will be promoted to Acting Vice President Governmental Affairs. Mr. Norton welcomed Patrick Blacklock as the next President and CEO. Mr. Norton also echoed the schedule change of the April Board of Directors meeting.

Mr. Norton provided a brief update on recent activities by RCRC staff, including several economic development-related conferences and workshops.

Mr. Norton invited Mr. Blacklock to address the RCRC Board of Directors. Mr. Blacklock thanked RCRC staff for meeting and assisting him during the transition. Mr. Blacklock announced that he will be connecting with RCRC Board Members to schedule a meeting.

## **RCRC Fiscal Update**

Milena De Melo, Controller, provided a brief financial update on RCRC's current fiscal status. Ms. De Melo presented the significant assets and significant liabilities as well as presented the RCRC Condensed Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2020. RCRC continues to be in good financial standing.

## **Change to RCRC 2021 Budget, Revised Contract Service Fees**

Lisa McCargar discussed the proposed revisions by RCRC leadership to the 2021 Operating Budget relative to Contract Service Fees, which are a significant source of RCRC's revenues. Ms. McCargar outlined the 2021 proposed RCRC budget revision and RCRC's financial impact.

The proposal would move some personnel and direct costs related to the forest resiliency project originally allocated to the Golden State Finance Authority (GSFA) to be reallocated to the GSNR. GSFA's fees will be reduced and GSNR's will increase. The total allocation will remain the same. Additionally, RCRC will record an "in-kind" donated service to GSNR, which will be a reduction in cash received from GSFA equal to the amount donated to GSNR. If approved, the change will be effective April 1, 2021.

## **Staff Recommendations**

Staff recommended that the RCRC Board of Directors approve the revised proposed 2021 RCRC Operating Budget.

**Supervisor David Rogers, Madera County, motioned to approve the revised proposed 2021 RCRC Operating Budget. Supervisor Denise Carter, Colusa County seconded the motion. Motion passed with all Supervisors present voting “Aye,” except as follows:**

**Not Voting: San Luis Obispo County**

### **Broadband Policy and Program Update**

Greg Norton provided an update on RCRC’s broadband policy and program efforts, of which is a long-standing priority for RCRC. Mr. Norton reiterated that RCRC is committed to a suite of solutions across the organization to connect rural, underserved communities to high-speed internet. On the policy front, Mr. Norton asked Senior Legislative Advocate Tracy Rhine to address the RCRC Board of Directors. Ms. Rhine highlighted a number of legislative and regulatory efforts in the state and federal level that would advance future-proof technology, urge state efforts on open-access, support public benefit, and promote fiber infrastructure. RCRC is a formal participant in five broadband-related regulatory proceedings at the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), and has served as an important resource to the CPUC.

On the economic development front, Mr. Norton asked Chief Economic Development Officer Barbara Hayes to address the RCRC Board of Directors. Ms. Hayes highlighted RCRC staff’s work on researching innovative broadband deployment models, applying for the Rural Development Opportunity Fund, providing assistance to RCRC Member Counties on broadband deployment projects vis-a-vis federal the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act funding, and other opportunities. Ms. Hayes emphasized that RCRC is continuing to work toward making “speed of commerce” service to rural California.

Mr. Norton discussed the RCRC Executive Committee’s appointment in late-2020 of Inyo County Supervisor Matt Kingsley to serve on the California High-Cost Fund-A Administrative Committee. Following the update, the RCRC Board of Directors discussed at length RCRC’s ongoing broadband deployment efforts.

### **Coronavirus Update**

Paul A. Smith and Sarah Dukett, Legislative Advocate, provided an update on the state’s COVID-19 response efforts, including an overview of the state’s third-party administrator (TPA) as well as the MyTurn platform for vaccine administration.

Ms. Dukett provided an overview on Governor Newsom’s plan to improve the vaccine roll-out by centralizing vaccine distribution through a TPA and the MyTurn platform. The state’s TPA, Blue Shield of California (Blue Shield), is to be fully managing the vaccination system by the end of March 2021. Ms. Dukett addressed the concerns on the transition of vaccine administration, usability issues, uncertainty surrounding the new allocation algorithm, adequate number of providers enrolled with Blue Shield, and sufficient communication. Currently, the state is tying vaccination administration to movement of the tier system based on its positivity results, adjusted case rate, and a health equity

metric. Ms. Dukett noted that vaccine availability is expected to increase as time progresses.

The RCRC Board of Directors discussed at length regarding a county's assigned tier, vaccine availability, and determination of essential individuals. Supervisor Denise Carter, Colusa County, updated the RCRC Board of Directors on the work that is continuing in CSAC's Rural Caucus Working Group for COVID-19 response. Supervisor Carter shared that counties have relayed to California Health and Human Services Agency Secretary Mark Ghaly that counties cannot stay in the Widespread (Purple) Tier for much longer, re-opening of local businesses, and vaccine distribution.

### **Coronavirus Relief Package – State & Local Assistance Update**

Paul A. Smith provided an update on the latest COVID-19 relief package. Mr. Smith discussed President Biden's \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 stimulus proposal (American Rescue Plan), which passed the Senate on March 6<sup>th</sup> and returned to the House and passed on March 10<sup>th</sup>. The American Rescue Plan now awaits President Biden's consideration.

As it relates to state and local funding section, Mr. Smith emphasized the \$350.7 billion in state and local aid section whereby counties will be receiving direct and flexible aid as well as funding for critical programs. Mr. Smith discussed the estimated county allocation and referred to the RCRC Member County Breakdown document with preliminary estimated projections totals. The aid would be distributed in two tranches, with states and localities receiving 50 percent of the funds within 60 days and the remaining 12 months after. Localities with a high number of unemployed individuals could be eligible to receive the remainder of the second portion of the funds simultaneously. As it relates to funding public lands counties, Mr. Smith also discussed a new public lands program to provide funding to eligible "revenue sharing" counties. As the funding details remain fluid, more details will be deliberated later on.

### **Forest Management and Wildfire Update**

Staci Heaton, Senior Regulatory Affairs Advocate, provided an update on efforts in the Legislature and various state and federal agencies to address California's persistent and catastrophic wildfire events. Ms. Heaton provided an update on efforts to pursue legislative actions as part of RCRC's Wildfire Prevention and Response Package. As part of the first phase, three bills - Assembly Bill 1431 (Frazier), Assembly Bill 1154 (Patterson), and Assembly Bill 1458 (Frazier) - have been introduced in the Legislature with more to follow as amendments are being made.

Ms. Heaton discussed legislative forestry and wildfire budget actions, including recent series of hearings to discuss Governor Newsom's \$1 billion Wildfire and Forest Resilience Expenditure Plan, the Senate's Blueprint for a Fire Safe California, and the Senate's \$500 million budget proposal from the General Fund in early action and investments. It is expected that the Assembly will introduce a separate budget proposal soon.

Ms. Heaton highlighted Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara's plans to conduct workshops to address home hardening. And, the introduction of Senate Bill 11 (Rubio),

a bill sponsored by the California Farm Bureau, relating to the California Fair Access to Insurance Requirements Plan was referenced. Supervisor Jim Holmes, Placer County, discussed the French Meadows Project, a forest health project that reduces wildfire risk in Placer County.

### **California Forest Watershed Alliance (CAFWA) Update**

Staci Heaton provided an update on the ongoing efforts of the California Forest Watershed Alliance (CAFWA), of which RCRC is a Charter Member, that advocate on forest health. Ms. Heaton briefly highlighted several efforts by CAFWA's workgroups with specific focus on state policy, federal policy, and communication efforts.

### **Board of Forestry State Fire Safe Regulations Update**

Tracy Rhine, Senior Legislative Advocate, provided an update on the Board of Forestry's (BOF) revisions to the State Fire Safe Regulations (Regulations) as well as RCRC's ongoing efforts to ensure that fire-prone areas of the state are not precluded from commercial, industrial, or residential development.

Following an initial draft of regulatory changes that was released in December 2020, and public and BOD board member feedback, BOF staff released a revised draft of the rulemaking proposal on February 8, 2021. While there has been some positive progress, many concerns remain on the revised regulations. The revised Regulations would create "no-build" areas throughout the state, prohibiting any building construction, including wildfire rebuilds and Accessory Dwelling Units, on roads that do not meet the minimum threshold standards. More recently, BOF staff announced that it would be making changes to the current draft proposal, specifically to address concerns expressed by RCRC and others regarding the inability of wildfire survivors to rebuild destroyed homes on parcels located on substandard roads.

The RCRC Board of Directors discussed at length regarding how counties can effectively share its concerns to BOF. Supervisor Diane Dillon, Napa County, suggested organizing a large group of supervisors to provide testimony. In addition, several RCRC Board Members requested for a county template letter and/or talking points to the Legislature and BOF. Ms. Rhine will reach out to the RCRC Board of Directors with more information to engage and participate.

### **California Public Utilities Commission Update**

Tracy Rhine, John Kennedy, Legislative Advocate, and Leigh Kammerich, Regulatory Affairs Specialist, provided an update on the progress of several California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) proceedings, including: the Wildfire Mitigation Plans, the De-Energization; the Self-Generation Incentive Program; the Microgrids and Resiliency; the Emergency Disaster Relief Program; the California Advanced Services Fund; the Broadband Deployment; the Frontier Bankruptcy; and, the Renewable Portfolio Standards.

Ms. Kammerich discussed the CPUC's Wildfire Safety Division audit of PG&E's implementation of the Enhanced Vegetation Management program whereby it was



discovered that PG&E had not been doing a significant portion of work. As such, the CPUC issued a draft resolution that would place PG&E into an Enhanced Oversight and Enforcement Process for insufficient progress of wildfire mitigation efforts. RCRC staff filed comments in support of the resolution.

Ms. Rhine discussed the Broadband Deployment proceeding whereby RCRC requested that necessary infrastructure be included with investor-owned utility service restoration to provide open-access fiber options to the affected community when rebuilding broadband infrastructure after a wildfire. RCRC staff also recently submitted comments supporting the Proposed Decision of the Frontier Bankruptcy proceeding, requesting that the required build-out of fiber to 350,000 locations prioritize rural areas, as well as engagement in the California Advanced Services Fund proceeding.

Mr. Kennedy discussed Phase 3 of the De-Energization proceeding that build upon existing guidelines that govern PSPS events. The proposed changes align with many of recommendations by RCRC, and RCRC will be filing comments supporting the changes as proposed in Phase 3 of the proceeding. RCRC is pursuing a joint motion with interested parties to request for the consolidation of prior decisions into one comprehensive document.

The RCRC Board of Directors discussed at length the various CPUC proceedings RCRC staff are currently undertaking.

### **Environmental Services Joint Powers Authority Update**

Staci Heaton provided a brief update on the Rural Counties' Environmental Services Joint Powers Authority (ESJPA). Of importance, Ms. Heaton shared that the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery Director Rachel Wagoner will be speaking at the meeting, which will be held via Zoom on March 11, 2021 at 9 a.m. ESJPA Board Members will also be discussing solid waste and recycling-related issues, Senate Bill 1383 Short-Lived Climate Pollutants regulations, and treated wood waste. Ms. Heaton encouraged all supervisors to attend.

Ms. Heaton also noted that the California Air Resources Board is going forward with its Advanced Clean Trucks regulation. RCRC staff will provide an update at the April RCRC Board of Directors meeting.

### **Water Issues Update**

Sidd Nag, Legislative Advocate, provided an update on issues involving California water policy. Mr. Nag highlighted Assembly Bill 1500 (E. Garcia) and Senate Bill 45 (Portantino) which are efforts to fund resource programs with general obligation bonds. Mr. Nag also discussed the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act implementation, and the introduction of Assembly Bill 252 (Rivas) regarding multibenefit land repurposing incentive. Finally, the newly-introduced legislation to expand regulation of water quality under the Clean Water Act was also referenced. Mr. Nag also discussed the now-dead Senate Bill 252 (Wiener), which would have banned the hunting of black bears for sport in California.

### **State & Federal Legislative Update**

The Governmental Affairs Department provided an update on issues being addressed at the state and federal level. At the federal level, Paul A. Smith focused the discussion on President Biden's American Rescue Plan. It is expected that once the package is enacted, the Biden Administration will focus on an Infrastructure Package that will likely reauthorize the Highway Bill.

At the state level, Mr. Smith noted that the bill introduction deadline was on February 19<sup>th</sup> with 2,369 bills introduced between the Senate and Assembly. Mr. Smith noted that Senate and Assembly policy committees have commenced, which is earlier than pre-COVID-19 days. Mr. Smith highlighted legislation that would require the top-two vote-getters seeking election to a county office to face-off in a General Election. Sidd Nag highlighted introduction of a Williamson Act bill as well as agriculture projects and priorities as it pertains to the Governor's 2021-22 proposed Budget. Tracy Rhine highlighted legislation that are currently taking form in the areas of housing, fire and land use, and telecommunication. Finally, John Kennedy highlighted legislation dealing with treated wood waste, SB 1383 regulation implementation, photovoltaic requirements, and sustainable communities strategies.

### **Adjournment**

Chair, Supervisor Stacy Corless, Mono County, adjourned the RCRC Board of Directors Meeting at 2:37 p.m.