

**Rural County Representatives of California  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Wednesday, April 27, 2022 – 9:00 a.m.  
1215 K Street, Suite 1650  
Sacramento, CA 95814**

**MINUTES**

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

Chair, Supervisor Dan Miller, Nevada County, presided. Present were President and CEO Patrick Blacklock, General Counsel Arthur J. Wylene, and Director of Board Operations, Maggie Chui, clerk. Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 9:54 a.m. A quorum was determined at that time. Those members present:

<b><u>Supervisor</u></b>	<b><u>County</u></b>
David Griffith	Alpine
Brian Oneto*	Amador
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
Aaron Albaugh*	Lassen
Robert Poythress*	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
Kevin Goss	Plumas
Bob Tiffany	San Benito
John Peschong	San Luis Obispo
Bob Nelson*	Santa Barbara
Tim Garman*	Shasta
Lee Adams	Sierra
Michael Kobseff*	Siskiyou
Mitch Mashburn*	Solano
Bob Williams	Tehama

Jeremy Brown*	Trinity
Dennis Townsend	Tulare
Kathleen Haff	Tuolumne
Randy Fletcher	Yuba

**Absent**

Jim Holmes	Placer
James Gore	Sonoma
Mat Conant	Sutter
Angel Barajas	Yolo

\*Attendance via Zoom

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Public Comments**

None

**Consent Agenda**

- a. March 9, 2022 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
- b. RCRC Resolution TC004-22: Authorizing Remote and Hybrid Teleconference Meetings of the RCRC Board of Directors Pursuant to Assembly Bill 361
- c. Establishment of Board of Directors Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Drought and Water Resiliency
- d. Establishment of Board of Directors Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Cannabis
- e. RCRC Communications Plan – Implementation Update

Chair, Supervisor Dan Miller, Nevada County, called for approval of the above-listed consent agenda items.

**Supervisor Kevin Goss, Plumas County, motioned to approve the following: Minutes from the March 9, 2022 Board of Directors Meeting; RCRC Resolution TC004-22; Establishment of Board of Directors Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Drought and Water Resiliency; Establishment of Board of Directors Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Cannabis; and, filing and receipt of the RCRC Communications Plan – Implementation Update. Supervisor Denise Carter, Colusa County seconded the motion. Motion passed with all Supervisors present voting “Aye.”**

## **RCRC Chair's Report**

Chair, Supervisor Dan Miller, Nevada County, reported on the California State Association of Counties' (CSAC) 2022 Legislative Conference that took place April 20-21 in Sacramento. Supervisor Miller highlighted the keynote presentation by Governor Newsom and a number of good quality breakout sessions.

## **President's Report**

Patrick Blacklock, President and CEO, provided a report on recent activities the organization is engaged on that align with the RCRC Strategic Plan goals. They are:

- Equitable Access: down payment assistance program for county employees launched by the Golden State Finance Authority; and, partnership with Calbright College to offer workforce development programs in rural communities.
- Impactful Advocacy: creation of new Ad Hoc Committees; and, recent legislative and regulatory successes by the Governmental Affairs Department, including advocacy work on RCRC-sponsored bills and other bills that impact rural counties.
- Healthy Communities: the Golden State Natural Resources application for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's grant; and, potential grant writing support services for RCRC Member Counties.
- Operational Excellence: establishment of a reserve policy; fiscal forecast preparation; and, an upcoming training on how to handle First Amendment Auditors.

## **Member County Concerns and Issues**

Supervisor Bob Tiffany, San Benito County, shared that San Benito County is experiencing negotiation issues with in-home care workers represented by the local Service Employees International Union.

Supervisor Gerry Hemmingsen, Del Norte County, shared his concern that Del Norte County does not have the resources and facilities available to hold mentally ill inmates that are found incompetent to stand trial. Supervisor Hemmingsen inquired if the facility located in Susanville (Lassen County) can be an option.

Supervisor Rex Bohn, Humboldt County, echoed Supervisor Hemmingsen's sentiment regarding the issue of dealing with mentally ill inmates, noting that several nurses were recently attacked in Humboldt County.

Supervisor Michael Kelley, Imperial County, shared that a giant cache of lithium was recently discovered in the Salton Sea in Imperial County which has piqued the interest of state and federal governments.

Supervisor Daron McDaniel, Merced County, announced that Merced County's inland port project launched on May 1<sup>st</sup>, and noted that the Fresno Council of Governments is vying to be the controlling agent for the distribution of funding.

Supervisor Bob Williams, Tehama County, shared that he visited legislative offices while he was in Sacramento to attend CSAC's 2022 Legislative Conference, and noted that it was a great opportunity to reconnect with legislative offices now that it is reopened to the public.

Supervisor Dan Miller, Nevada County, shared that there is a dispute to reopen the Idaho-Maryland Mine in Nevada County.

Supervisor Doug Teeter, Butte County, referenced Assembly Bill 38 (Chapter 391, Statues of 2019) regarding defensible space inspections, and discussed the issue of complying with defensible space requirements for buyers and sellers of a property.

Supervisor Chris Lopez, Monterey County, shared that Monterey County's County Administrative Officer Charles McKee has announced his retirement, effective at the end of the year.

Supervisor EJ Crandell, Lake County, shared that Lake County's County Administrative Officer has recently retired, and Susan Parker is serving as the Interim County Administrative Officer.

Supervisor Miles Menetrey, Mariposa County, shared that Mariposa County has been dealing with an individual that is regularly suing Mariposa County for non-compliance of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Supervisor Randy Fletcher, Yuba County, thanked RCRC staff for their ongoing work on fire, water, broadband, and other issues on behalf of rural counties.

Supervisor Glenn McGourty, Mendocino County, shared that the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors recently adopted a proclamation in support of Ukraine.

Supervisor Geri Byrne, Modoc County, stated that counties are dealing with inflation, and inquired about assembling a discussion on how counties are dealing with it. Supervisor Byrne also discussed her concern regarding Senate Bill 1044 (Durazo) regarding states of emergency and employees.

Supervisor Dennis Townsend, Tulare County, voiced his concern regarding Senate Bill 1 (Chapter 5, Statues of 2017) funding to fix rural roads. Supervisor Townsend stated that CSAC is currently working on a vehicle registration legislation that could alleviate the burden on counties.

Supervisor Brian Oneto, Amador County, echoed the sentiments of several RCRC Board Members, including concern in dealing with mentally ill inmates, ADA non-compliance lawsuits, and SB 1 funding formula. Supervisor Oneto also voiced his concern regarding the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) not properly removing trees that are cut down.

Supervisor Michael Kobseff, Siskiyou County, shared his concern regarding the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's flat fee on development projects both small and large. Supervisor Kobseff also discussed his concern regarding Timber Harvest Plans for small landowners.

Supervisor Robert Poythress, Madera County, shared his concern regarding the Strategic Growth Council's transportation assessment report and implementation as part of Assembly Bill 285 (Chapter 605, Statues of 2019), and asked RCRC to engage on this issue.

Supervisor Jeremy Brown, Trinity County, inquired if fellow RCRC Member Counties have had experience with high upfront costs to access the Federal Emergency Management Agency funding for disaster relief. Supervisor Brown also discussed the issue of personnel retention issues as deputies tend to move to more populated areas, and noted possibly utilizing the American Rescue Plan funds for one-time bonuses.

Supervisor Stacy Corless, Mono County, spoke about her interest in a wildlife crossing project in Mono County, and noted that budgetary and legislative efforts should not only focus on urban areas.

Supervisor Tim Garman, Shasta County, echoed Supervisor Hemmingsen's sentiment regarding the issue of dealing with mentally ill inmates, and requested for a discussion on joint efforts to address this area of concern. Supervisor Garman also echoed Supervisor Oneto's concern regarding PG&E leaving behind trees that are cut down, and suggested to counties to reach out to their local PG&E representative to facilitate clean-up.

### **Water Issues Update**

Sidd Nag, Policy Advocate, provided an update on current issues involving California's water policy. Mr. Nag discussed Governor Newsom's issuance of an amended emergency drought proclamation on March 28<sup>th</sup> that enacts new directives and restrictions, including directing new water use conservation targets, placing limits on permissible landscaping, requiring maintenance of fish habitat, creating new rules on water hauling, increasing focus on illegal diversions, restricting new well permits, and promoting groundwater recharge. Mr. Nag focused on the expanded drought order's most far-reaching provision which would affect the issuance of new well permits by local authorities.

Mr. Nag discussed the Legislature's continued review of water-related State Budget items which include over \$750 million to various programs to support drought-related activities. RCRC staff will have more information once the Governor's May Revision is released next month.

Mr. Nag reported on the following water-related legislation: Assembly Bill 2201 (Bennett); and, Senate Bill 1157 (Hertzberg).

Following the presentation, the RCRC Board of Directors discussed at length the Governor's expanded drought order and threat to local control.

### **Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Wildfire and Forest Stewardship Update**

Staci Heaton, Senior Policy Advocate, provided a report on the activities of the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Wildfire and Forest Stewardship (Committee). Since September 2021, the Committee has convened five times, and examined the topics of home hardening/defensible space, communication with PG&E, the USDA Forest Service's (USFS) 10-Year Strategy, and accessing mitigation funding. The Committee had conversations with the former Director of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Ken Pimlott, representatives from PG&E, representatives from the USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region, and Sonoma County staff.

At the next meeting, the Committee will make policy recommendations on RCRC's federal fire suppression strategy, including discussion surrounding H.R. 6903 (McClintock), the National Association of Counties' Proposed Interim Resolution Requesting USFS Rulemaking and the National Environmental Policy Act for Wildland Fire Management is Imperative with Immediate Interim Initial Fire Attack Direction, and USFS Chief Randy Moore's Letter of Intent for Wildfire.

The Committee will continue to meet through September 2022, at which time it will deliver a final report of recommendations to the RCRC Board of Directors for consideration.

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

Staci Heaton 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 discussed RCRC's State Budget request for state wildfire and forest resilience budget expenditures which include at least \$3 billion over the next two years and \$50 million each year in transportation subsidies for biomass infrastructure as well as other investments to aid in the state's forest resilience goals.

Ms. Heaton provided an update on the USFS's 10-Year strategy, whereby USFS has approved its first 10 investments to landscapes with two in California (North Yuba and Stanislaus Counties).

Ms. Heaton highlighted the following forest management- and wildfire-related legislation: Assembly Bill 1717 (Aguiar-Curry); Assembly Bill 1644 (Flora); and, Senate Bill 926 (Dodd).

Ms. Heaton discussed RCRC's recent appointment by the Office of the State Fire Marshall to serve on the Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee (WMAC) as created by Assembly Bill 9 (Chapter 225, Statutes of 2021). WMAC will be meeting monthly to develop community wildfire preparedness and mitigation efforts.

Following the presentation, the RCRC Board of Directors discussed the potential revitalization of the Tree Mortality Task Force, and external firefighting services available to put out wildfires.

### **State and Federal 30 by 30 Conservation Efforts**

Staci Heaton provided an update on the efforts to conserve 30 percent of the state's lands and coastal waters and 30 percent of the nation's lands and waterways by 2030 under the "30x30" plan. RCRC has participated in several workshops and has filed a comment letter expressing concern on the definition of "conservation" as well as apprehension over the state's neglect in addressing how it plans to work with the federal strategy, local governments, and regional conservation programs that are currently underway. RCRC also expressed concern over the state potentially acquiring more land that are under the state's management, as well as the exclusion of federal lands.

The State Legislature has also held an informational hearing to discuss the 30x30 plan's incomplete nature of the initial draft, the need to address forest land management, and revitalization or restructuring of the Williamson Act program.

RCRC will continue to engage on both state and federal 30x30 plan policy, including working with the National Association of Counties as they advocate the Biden Administration on the America the Beautiful Initiative.

The RCRC Board of Directors discussed at length the importance of revitalizing the Williamson Act program. Mary-Ann Warmerdam, Senior Vice President Governmental Affairs, expressed appreciation for ongoing RCRC Member County engagement and interest, and noted that follow-up with legislators can amplify RCRC's visibility at the State Capitol.

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

Leigh Kammerich, Policy Advocate, and Tracy Rhine, Senior Policy Advocate, provided an update on RCRC's involvement at the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), including the California Advanced Services Fund's (CASF) Broadband Loan Loss Reserve (LLR) program, the broadband Federal Funding Account (FFA), the Minimum Service Quality Standards Proceeding, improvements to CPUC and the Office of Energy Infrastructure, and update to the large utility Wildfire Mitigation Plan.

Ms. Rhine discussed RCRC's recent submission of the CASF's Broadband LLR program, Phase IIA, and Whitepaper to CPUC, which would provide funding to cover costs related to the financing of broadband infrastructure by a local government agency or nonprofit organization. Ms. Rhine discussed the CPUC's adoption of rules for the \$2 billion broadband FFA grant program. The FFA Decision lowers the pricing cap commitment to five years, allows for Consumer Price Index adjustment, and eliminates the requirement for low-cost service offering beyond participation in the federal Affordable Connectivity Program. The CPUC must now determine "priority areas" that represent eligible project areas within each county. Finally, Ms. Rhine also discussed RCRC requesting party

status to a new proceeding on minimum service quality standards for Voice Over Internal Protocol, wireless, and broadband service.

Ms. Kammerich reported that RCRC recently submitted comments on the large Investor-Owned Utilities 2022 Wildfire Mitigation Plan updates. Ms. Kammerich also discussed the State Auditor's recommendations to CPUC's and the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety's oversight of electrical safety and reliability.

The RCRC Board of Directors discussed CPUC's priorities and RCRC's ongoing engagement with CPUC.

### **Other Regulatory Committee Issues**

Tracy Rhine provided an update on the Board of Forestry's (BOF) Fire Safe Regulations (Regulations). Ms. Rhine reminded supervisors that the BOF tabled further discussion in March following stakeholder feedback. At that time, RCRC and a working group of local governments submitted comments urging the BOF to reconsider its approach of the rulemaking process. The BOF has now released the agenda for the upcoming meeting to discuss the Regulations. While language for the revised draft has yet to be released, it is expected to be narrowed down in scope. RCRC staff will continue to monitor and engage with the BOF on the Regulations.

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

Mary-Ann Warmerdam provided an update on issues being addressed at the state level, including budget and legislative deadlines and schedule.

On behalf of John Kennedy, Policy Advocate, Ms. Warmerdam reported on Assembly Bill 2481(Smith), regarding hazardous waste collection and management.

Staci Heaton reported on Assembly Bill 2419 (Bryan), which would create a state Justice40 Oversight Committee to oversee expenditure of funds.

Sarah Dukett, Policy Advocate, reported on the following legislation:

- Brown Act – Assembly Bill 1944 (Lee); Assembly Bill 2449 (B. Rubio); and, Senate Bill 1100 (Cortese).
- Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment Court – Assembly Bill 2830 (Bloom); and, Senate Bill 1338 (Hueso).
- Cannabis – Senate Bill 1186 (Wiener); Senate Bill 1326 (Caballero); and, Senate Bill 1426 (Caballero).
- Public Safety/Emergency Management – Assembly Bill 1608 (Gipson); and Senate Bill 1044 (Durazo) .

Sidd Nag reported on the following topics of interest: wildlife crossing, transportation planning, and climate resiliency projects.

Following an update at the state level, American Continental Group's Senior Partner Sheryl Cohen, provided an update on issues being addressed at the federal level. As

part of RCRC's federal priorities, Ms. Cohen provided an update on: RCRC's 2023 Farm Bill reauthorization strategic plan, such as reviewing the Zero Emission Vehicle funding opportunities, and development of an RCRC whitepaper; Bipartisan Infrastructure Act implementation; and, FY 2023 appropriations, including a Payment in Lieu of Taxes funding request.

**June 2022 Board of Directors/County of the Chair Meeting Update**

Dorothy Poole, Governmental Affairs Operations Manager, provided an update on this year's County of the Chair meeting to be hosted by RCRC Chair Dan Miller in Nevada County from June 15-June 16, 2022, with lodging available on June 14<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Poole provided a brief overview of the events, and requested supervisors to complete the registration form as soon as possible.

**Adjournment**

Chair, Supervisor Dan Miller, Nevada County, adjourned the RCRC Board of Directors Meeting at 1:49 p.m.