

**Rural County Representatives of California
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, August 18, 2021 – 9:00 a.m.
1215 K Street, Suite 1650 – Board Room
Sacramento, CA 95814**

MINUTES

Call to Order, Determination of Quorum and Self Introductions

Chair, Supervisor Stacy Corless, Mono County, called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

A quorum was determined at that time. Those present:

<u>Supervisor</u>	<u>County</u>
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
Aaron Albaugh	Lassen
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
Kevin Goss	Plumas
Bob Tiffany	San Benito
John Peschong	San Luis Obispo
Les Baugh	Shasta
Lee Adams	Sierra
Michael Kobseff	Siskiyou
Mat Conant	Sutter
Bob Williams	Tehama
Jeremy Brown	Trinity
Dennis Townsend	Tulare
Kathleen Haff	Tuolumne
Randy Fletcher	Yuba

Absent

Brian Oneto	Amador
David Rogers	Madera
James Gore	Sonoma
Angel Barajas	Yolo

Others in Attendance

Supervisor January Riddle, Alpine County
Supervisor Terry Woodrow, Alpine County
Supervisor Gary Bridges, Lassen County
Supervisor Ned Coe, Modoc County
Supervisor John Peters, Mono County
Gly Milburn, Ygrene Energy Fund
Crystal Crawford, Ygrene Energy Fund
Randy Hanvelt, Associated California Loggers
Nadia Tipton, Mendocino County
Jeff Tyrell, Mendocino County
Judy Morris, Mendocino County
Jeffrey Thorsby, Nevada County
Jennifer Larocque, Sonoma County
Carrie Scarlata
Kim Lewis

Staff in Attendance

Patrick Blacklock, President and CEO
Lisa McCargar, Chief Operating Officer/Chief Financial Officer
Craig Ferguson, Senior Vice President
Mary-Ann Warmerdam, Senior Vice President Governmental Affairs
Barbara Hayes, Chief Economic Development Officer
Arthur J. Wylene, General Counsel
Staci Heaton, Senior Regulatory Affairs Advocate
Tracy Rhine, Senior Legislative Advocate
John Kennedy, Legislative Advocate
Sarah Dukett, Legislative Advocate
Sidd Nag, Legislative Advocate
Leigh Kammerich, Regulatory Affairs Advocate
Maggie Chui, Senior Governmental Affairs Coordinator/Clerk of the Board
Milena De Melo, Controller
Dorothy Poole, External Affairs Coordinator
Elizabeth Jensen, Assistant Controller
Sanjay Lee, Financial Analyst
Terrance Rodgers, Economic Development Officer
Carolyn Sunseri, Marketing Director
Carolyn Jhajj, Communications Director
Russell Gould, Consultant
Mary Pitto, Consultant

Pledge of Allegiance

Review and Approval of June 17, 2021 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Chair, Supervisor Stacy Corless, Mono County, called for approval of the minutes from the June 17, 2021 Board of Directors Meeting.

Supervisor Randy Fletcher, Yuba County, motioned to approve the minutes from the June 17, 2021 Board of Directors Meeting, as amended. Finalized minutes amended to omit “The June 17, 2021 RCRC Board of Directors Meeting was held virtually with limited in-person attendance” verbiage. Supervisor David Griffith, Alpine County seconded the motion. Motion passed with all Supervisors present voting “Aye,” except as follows:

Not Voting: Trinity County

Abstaining: Siskiyou County

RCRC Chair’s Report

Chair, Supervisor Stacy Corless, Mono County, welcomed supervisors to the RCRC Board of Directors meeting. Supervisor Corless acknowledged the challenges counties are facing with the wildfires currently burning throughout California. Supervisor Corless voiced her disappointment with the recent Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force meeting.

Supervisor Corless looks forward to meeting again in-person at the upcoming RCRC 2021 Annual Meeting in Monterey County.

President’s Report

Patrick Blacklock, President and CEO, recognized that wildfire and drought are issues that require attention. As it relates to wildfire, the RCRC Board of Directors will have an opportunity to discuss immediate and future opportunities during the strategic plan discussion. In addition, Mr. Blacklock and Lisa McCargar, Chief Operating Officer/Chief Financial Officer, are working on potential partnerships to assist RCRC member counties with wildfire recovery. To raise the prominence of wildfire, formation of a wildfire and forest stewardship ad hoc committee was announced. Mr. Blacklock highlighted recent wildfire-related activities by the Governmental Affairs Department, including several key legislation and adjustments to the federal wildfire suppression policy. As it relates to drought, RCRC staff are actively working with the State Legislature and agencies to ensure the rural voice is heard.

Mr. Blacklock announced the hiring of Bob Burris who will be joining RCRC’s Economic Development Department as the Deputy Chief Economic Development Officer at the end of the month. RCRC’s continued efforts on strengthening broadband connections in rural communities was also highlighted.

Member County Concerns and Issues

Supervisor Jeremy Brown, Trinity County, shared his concern pertaining to the Monument Fire (Trinity County) response, and witnessing first-hand the breakdown in communication between those that are experiencing the fires and those that are responding to the fires. Supervisor Brown also shared his concern about pay discrepancies between federal and private firefighters. Supervisor Brown offered to participate on the wildfire and forest stewardship ad hoc committee.

Supervisor Geri Byrne, Modoc County, offered neighboring counties needing wildfire assistance to reach out to her. Supervisor Byrne voiced her concern regarding the worsening drought conditions and drying wells, and would like to see the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services' (CalOES) assist as opposed to the Department of Water Resources (DWR).

Supervisor Michael Kobseff, Siskiyou County, spoke on several issues, which include: the rising cost of health insurance yet people are unable to obtain services; water curtailment order concerns; and, the need for counties to be more aggressive in demanding wildfire assistance from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS).

Supervisor Randy Fletcher, Yuba County, echoed Supervisor Kobseff's comment regarding the need to be more aggressive in demanding wildfire assistance. Supervisor Fletcher offered to participate on the wildfire and forest stewardship ad hoc committee.

Supervisor Fletcher stated that he is experiencing more issues now more than in the past with Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) and asked supervisors to reach out to him if they are as well.

Supervisor David Griffith, Alpine County, shared his disappointment of how the Tamarack Fire was handled. Supervisor Griffith pointed out USFS's implementation of policies as problematic.

Supervisor Gerry Hemmingsen, Del Norte County, shared his concern regarding Assembly Bill 379 (Gallagher) dealing with state conservation lands and tribal governments. If passed, several RCRC member counties would suffer the consequences.

Supervisor Kathleen Haff, Tuolumne County, spoke about the current drought conditions. Supervisor Haff noted that Tuolumne County has a good relationship with USFS. Supervisor Haff also inquired about RCRC involvement on the Board of Forestry's (BOF) Fire Safe Regulations (Regulations). In response, Arthur J. Wylene, General Counsel, shared that RCRC has been directly involved with BOF on the Regulations.

Supervisor Kevin Goss, Plumas County, shared his frustration on the handling of the Dixie Fire, and the breakdown in communication with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Supervisor Goss noted that it may take up to 2-3 months until internet would be restored. On a positive note, Supervisor Goss shared that Five Marys Farms

in Fort Jones assembled a fundraiser with a great turnout. Supervisor Goss offered to participate on the wildfire and forest stewardship ad hoc committee.

Supervisor Lee Adams, Sierra County, noted that most communities are now unlivable following these devastating wildfires. Supervisor Adams requested RCRC to prepare a letter to the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Supervisor of its handling of the Tamarack Fire in Alpine County.

Supervisor Ned Coe, Modoc County, shared that Modoc County is assisting Trinity County with a skilled nursing facility. Supervisor Coe also conveyed his concern regarding Cooperative Extension and 4-H programs.

Supervisor Denise Carter, Colusa County, echoed Supervisor Byrne's comment regarding the worsening drought conditions. Supervisor Carter questioned why the Federal Emergency Management Agency was able to extend for Project Roomkey through the end of year, yet the state cannot allocate funds to CalOES for drying wells.

Supervisor Mat Conant, Sutter County, spoke about his concern regarding the on-going, worsening drought conditions. Supervisor Conant also spoke about his concern regarding the wildfires burning across California.

Supervisor Gary Bridges, Lassen County, noted that nothing is being done to reduce wildfire threats, and the constant mismanagement from monitoring to fighting these wildfires. Supervisor Bridges offered to participate on the wildfire and forest stewardship ad hoc committee.

Supervisor Bridges also shared his continued concern regarding the closure of the California Correctional Center in Lassen County.

Supervisor Glenn McGourty, Mendocino County, thanked Sidd Nag, Legislative Advocate, for his help on making the right connection as it relates to the Cooperative Extension and 4-H programs.

Supervisor McGourty also spoke about his concern regarding the on-going, worsening drought conditions as communities are running out of water.

Supervisor Matt Kingsley, Inyo County, announced the recent passing of Inyo County's County Administrative Officer Clint Quilter. In response, Supervisor Corless requested that today's RCRC Board of Directors meeting adjourn in memory of Mr. Quilter.

Public Comments

None

Creation of a New Joint Powers Authority for the Purpose of Expanding Broadband Access and Quality in Rural Counties

Barbara Hayes, Chief Economic Development Officer, and Arthur J. Wylene provided an overview of the formation of a new joint powers authority (JPA), Golden State Connect Authority (GSCA), to expand broadband access and affordability in rural counties. The primary goals for the project structure as well as the specific provisions as contained in the proposed JPA were presented.

Presently, the GSCA's Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement is under review by RCRC member counties administrative offices and County Counsels. Once finalized, RCRC staff proposed to submit the Agreement to RCRC member counties for consideration and potential approval by their Board of Supervisors.

Following the presentation, Supervisor David Griffith, Alpine County, proposed revisions to *Section 17. Indemnification* of the JPA by amending the reference to indemnity of GSCA officers and employees from "may" to "shall."

Recommendation

It was recommended that the RCRC Board of Directors authorize the President and General Counsel to finalize the proposed Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement, as amended, and submit the Agreement to RCRC member counties for the Board of Supervisors approval.

Supervisor Alpine County, motioned to approve the above-mentioned recommendation, with the amendment to Section 17. Supervisor Randy Fletcher, Yuba County, seconded the motion. Motion passed by the following roll call vote taken:

"Aye": Alpine County; Butte County; Calaveras County; Colusa County; Del Norte County; El Dorado County; Glenn County; Humboldt County; Imperial County; Inyo County; Lake County; Lassen County; Mariposa County; Mendocino County; Merced County; Modoc County; Mono County; Monterey County; Napa County; Nevada County; Placer County; San Benito County; San Luis Obispo County; Shasta County; Sierra County; Siskiyou County; Sutter County; Trinity County; Tulare County; Tuolumne County; Yuba County

"No": None

Abstaining: None

Not Voting: Plumas County; Tehama County

RCRC Proposed Paydown of Unfunded Pension Liability

Lisa McCargar and Milena DeMelo, Controller, discussed RCRC's proposal to paydown RCRC's unfunded pension liability. Ms. McCargar and Ms. DeMelo believe that making

a contribution toward RCRC's unfunded pension liability demonstrates a proactive exercise of fiduciary responsibility. RCRC has worked with the California Public Employees' Retirement System's (CalPERS) actuary and recommended the following:

- RCRC shall make a \$1,070,000 contribution on or before September 1, 2021, as a paydown of the unfunded liability; and,
- RCRC will work with CalPERS to shorten the amortization period from 16 years to 5 years, stabilizing future annual contributions to a predictable fixed dollar amount.

Recommendation

Staff recommended that the RCRC Board of Directors authorize the use of up to \$1,070,000 of existing resources to paydown unfunded pension liability.

Supervisor Mat Conant, Sutter County, motioned to approve the above-mentioned recommendation. Supervisor Randy Fletcher, Yuba County, seconded the motion. Motion passed by the following roll call vote taken:

“Aye”: Alpine County; Butte County; Calaveras County; Colusa County; Del Norte County; El Dorado County; Glenn County; Humboldt County; Imperial County; Inyo County; Lake County; Lassen County; Mariposa County; Mendocino County; Merced County; Modoc County; Mono County; Monterey County; Napa County; Nevada County; Placer County; San Benito County; San Luis Obispo County; Shasta County; Sierra County; Siskiyou County; Sutter County; Trinity County; Tulare County; Tuolumne County; Yuba County

“No”: None

Abstaining: None

Not Voting: Plumas County; Tehama County

CalPERS, RCRC, and CSAC Joint Presentation Announcement – Topic: Investment Returns and Asset Liability Management Process

Lisa McCargar announced that the CalPERS, RCRC, and the California State Association (CSAC) of Counties, will be hosting a joint webinar presentation on September 23rd regarding investment returns and asset liability management process. Once details are finalized, invitation to the presentation will be distributed.

RCRC Communications Plan – Overview

Carolyn Jhajj, Communications Director, provided an overview of the communications plan. Ms. Jhajj presented a “Communications Plan” PowerPoint, and outlined the following action items: unify organizational communication; evaluate and enhance effectiveness of current communication methods; and, amplify organizational communication. Members of the RCRC Board of Directors shared their support for the communications plan.

Rural County Photo Contest

Dorothy Poole, External Affairs Coordinator, and Maggie Chui, Senior Governmental Affairs Coordinator/Clerk of the Board, presented the three finalist photos for the RCRC's 5th Annual Rural County Photo Contest to the RCRC Board of Directors for their consideration. The contest was created to promote tourism and local economic development. The winning photo will be displayed at RCRC's 2021 Annual Meeting and may be used in various marketing materials or work products throughout the next year.

Staff Recommendation

RCRC staff recommended the RCRC Board of Directors to cast their votes on the selected three finalist photos to determine a winner.

Photo "1": Calaveras County; Glenn County; Imperial County; Sutter County

Photo "2": Alpine County; Colusa County; El Dorado County; Lassen County; Merced County; Modoc County; Monterey County; San Benito County; San Luis Obispo County; Sierra County; Siskiyou County; Tulare County; Yuba County

Photo "3": Del Norte County; Humboldt County; Inyo County; Lake County; Mariposa County; Mendocino County; Mono County; Napa County; Placer County; Trinity County; Tuolumne County

Not Voting: Butte County; Nevada County; Plumas County; Shasta County; Tehama County

Subsequently, the following winners were announced:

- **Grand Prize Winner** – Photo "2": "Field of Green" by Ramiro Ruiz, photo of a sunset over a lettuce field in Monterey County
- **Second Place Winner** – Photo "3": "The Lost Coast" by Miranda Moore, photo of a field of flowers in Humboldt County
- **Third Place Winner** – Photo "1": "Illuminated Waters" by Gil Rebollar, photo of a sunset illuminating over a body of water in Imperial County

Annual Meeting Update

Dorothy Poole provided an update on RCRC's 2021 Annual Meeting, September 29 – October 1, 2021 in Monterey County. Thus far, 40 sponsors have committed to supporting the event. Ms. Poole announced the panel discussions, and encouraged RCRC Board Members to visit the RCRC 2021 Annual Meeting website for the most up-to-date information.

Annual Meeting - County Basket Auction & Drawing

Barbara Hayes outlined RCRC's 2021 Annual Meeting basket auction and drawing process and procedure. Each year, following the Thursday night's dinner at RCRC's 2021

Annual Meeting, individual county baskets are auctioned off during the county basket auction and drawing. The proceeds from the auction provide support for a handful of local charities in the county of the RCRC Chair. This year's Chair, Supervisor Stacy Corless, Mono County, has selected the following charities to benefit from the proceeds: Disabled Sports Eastern Sierra/National Wounded Warrior Center, the Eastern Sierra Conservation Corps, the Valentine Eastern Sierra Reserves, and the Mono Arts Council.

RCRC Strategic Plan Engagement Results

Carolyn Jhaji provided an update of the strategic plan process and next steps. The strategic plan will serve as a guiding document to be used by the RCRC Board of Directors to set policies and priorities for the organization. Ms. Jhaji presented a "RCRC Strategic Plan: Engagement Results" PowerPoint and unveiled the vision statement recommendation and draft theme results from the June RCRC Board of Directors engagement session whereby the RCRC Board of Directors were asked for their input on areas of focus for RCRC for the next 3 to 5 years.

Ms. Jhaji and Russell Gould, Consultant, led the RCRC Board of Directors in a discussion whereby they asked if additional topics should be included, altered, or removed. Members of the RCRC Board of Directors provided their feedback and recommendations at length. Ms. Jhaji and Mr. Gould will review the information gathered and provide an update at a future RCRC Board of Directors meeting.

State & Federal Legislative Update

Mary-Ann Warmerdam, Senior Vice President Governmental Affairs, provided an update on issues being addressed at the state and federal level. Ms. Warmerdam welcomed the hiring of Jacqueline Wong-Hernandez who will be joining CSAC as the new Deputy Executive Director of Legislative Affairs. Ms. Warmerdam recognized the Governmental Affairs Department staff for their work, which include work on broadband, cannabis, drought, fire, and working with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).

At the state level, Ms. Warmerdam discussed the final four weeks of the 2021 Legislative Session (September 10th) and Governor Newsom's recall election (September 14th). Sarah Dukett, Legislative Advocate, provided an update on the recently-amended Senate Bill 594 (Glazer) regarding the state's redistricting deadline and requirements.

At the federal level, Ms. Warmerdam discussed the status of the bipartisan infrastructure package and the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration's programs to help distressed and underserved communities impacted by the pandemic.

Forest Management and Wildfire Update

In the absence of Staci Heaton, Senior Regulatory Affairs Advocate, Mary-Ann Warmerdam provided a brief update on efforts in the Legislature and various state and federal agencies to address California's persistent and catastrophic wildfire events. Ms. Warmerdam discussed the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Expenditure Plan, adjustments to the federal wildfire suppression policy in the wake of the Tamarack Fire, and the federal bipartisan infrastructure package.

The RCRC Board of Directors were encouraged to review the memo as contained in the Supplemental Packet for a more in-depth overview.

Drought Update

Sidd Nag, Legislative Advocate, provided an update on current issues involving California's drought policy. Mr. Nag discussed the Legislature's appropriations in drought response funding, which are currently awaiting the Newsom Administration's plan for distribution. Additionally, Mr. Nag reported that DWR has distributed the first round of drought resiliency grants to ten California community water systems.

Water Issues Update

Sidd Nag provided an update on current issues involving California water policy. Mr. Nag discussed Senate Bill 552 (Hertzberg) which requires counties to establish drought task forces, and encouraged counties to establish a drought task force by December 31, 2021. Mr. Nag also highlighted Assembly Bill 252 (Rivas), which creates a grant incentive program for growers repurposing production agriculture to non-production "multibenefit" uses. The western and rural water projects that are part of the federal bipartisan infrastructure package was also discussed.

In other natural resources-related matters update, Mr. Nag discussed Assembly Bill 379 (Gallagher), which authorizes transfer of state conservation lands to tribal governments. Currently, RCRC has a "watch" position on the bill.

Environmental Services Joint Powers Authority

Staci Heaton provided a brief update on the Rural Counties' Environmental Services Joint Powers Authority (ESJPA). Ms. Heaton shared that the next ESJPA meeting will take place on Thursday, August 19, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom. ESJPA Board Members will receive a presentation from the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery. There will also be discussions surrounding illegal dumping, Senate Bill 1383 Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Organics Regulations implementation, the State Water Resources Control Board's Construction Storm Water General Permit, and issues related to solid waste and recycling. Ms. Heaton encouraged all supervisors to attend.

California Public Utilities Commission Update

Tracy Rhine, Senior Legislative Advocate, and John Kennedy, Legislative Advocate, provided an update on RCRC's involvement at CPUC. Mr. Kennedy reported that discussions are to get underway on Rule 20 Underground Guidebook for local jurisdiction, and CPUC's requirement of PG&E to be more transparent on Public Safety Power Shut-off event decision-making, CPUC's approval of the scope of work for an Independent Safety Monitor to oversee PG&E, and approval of all utility Wildfire Mitigation Plans by the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety.

Ms. Rhine reported on Frontier Communications' abysmal response on post-fire service restoration in Alpine and Mono Counties, as well as the implementation and current

proceedings of the \$6 billion broadband infrastructure bill (Senate Bill 156; Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Committee).

Adjournment

Chair, Supervisor Stacy Corless, Mono County, adjourned the RCRC Board of Directors Meeting in memory of Inyo County's County Administrative Officer Clint Quilter at 2:53 p.m.