



May 5, 2020

The Honorable Bill Quirk  
Member, California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 2163  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 2296 – SUPPORT  
As Introduced February 14, 2020**

Dear Assembly Member Quirk:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), we support your Assembly Bill 2296. This measure would offer a “fund stabilization” option for local jurisdictions to implement their Local Primacy Agency (LPA) drinking water oversight programs. RCRC is an association of thirty-seven rural California counties, and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from those member counties.

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) is responsible for the oversight of public drinking water with 15 or more connections and regularly serving 25 or more people for at least 60 days out of the year. However, in 30 California counties, this responsibility has been delegated to the local health officer and administered through local Environmental Health programs through LPA Delegation Agreements. Historically, the program has been funded by a direct fee charged to the public water system. Differences in state and local costs has resulted in fee variability, but overall, the fees charged cover the costs to administer the program in most jurisdictions. Over the past several years, program costs have outpaced this fee base and a number of jurisdictions have surrendered their delegated authority back to the State. This situation has created some inequities among systems, particularly those serving disadvantaged communities who are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain appropriate levels of funding.

AB 2296 would enable counties who oversee their water system through LPA delegation agreements to provide the required level of system oversight, as specified by state and federal law, with a more efficient use of limited resources. Specifically, AB 2296 changes the Public Drinking Water Oversight system to provide an opt-in/optional alternative funding mechanism as follows:

1215 K Street, Suite 1650, Sacramento, CA 95814 | [www.rcrcnet.org](http://www.rcrcnet.org) | 916.447.4806 | Fax: 916.448.3154

- Allow the Division of Drinking Water to implement and administer small public water system oversight fees statewide;
- Aggregated public water system fees to fund the work of both state and local oversight staff;
- Develop staffing formulas so the appropriate level of oversight is maintained statewide; and,
- Evaluate the current SWRCB public water system fee schedule and adjust as appropriate.

AB 2296 would provide an opportunity for those counties who desire to do so, and an option to secure sustainable funding for their LPA regulatory program. By aggregating public drinking water fees statewide, small community water systems will be able to direct limited funds into providing safe drinking water to their communities.

For the above reasons, RCRC supports your measure. Please feel free to reach out if you believe we can assist you in the passage of this measure. I can be reached at (916) 447-4806 or [mwarmerdam@rcrcnet.org](mailto:mwarmerdam@rcrcnet.org).

Sincerely,



MARY-ANN WARMERDAM  
Senior Legislative Advocate

cc: Members, Assembly Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials Committee  
Josh Tooker, Chief Consultant, Assembly Environmental Safety & Toxic  
Materials Committee  
Greg Melkonian, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus