



**RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES OF CALIFORNIA
2023-24 POLICY PRINCIPLES**

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Rural County Representatives of California

2023-24 Policy Principles

The RCRC Board of Directors regularly adopts a set of Policy Principles that guide legislative and regulatory advocacy efforts for the organization. These Policy Principles guide the organization's priorities on broad categories and specific issues and allow RCRC staff to take formal positions on individual pieces of legislation and regulatory proposals each year.

AGRICULTURE

AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

RCRC supports the rigorous, science-based federal regulation of biotech products, and the consistent statewide policy for the use of biotechnology in agriculture. RCRC supports efforts to educate consumers about biotechnology, as consumer perception and market acceptance will determine the viability of the technology and the products produced. RCRC supports allowing, as a marketing tool, the voluntary labeling of products as not produced utilizing biotechnology if the label statements and/or advertising are not false or misleading, and the labeling and/or advertising meets established federal guidelines or standards, if any. Lastly, RCRC supports policies including state funding for colleges and universities to support research and development of biotechnology techniques in agriculture to improve the productivity and competitiveness of California's agricultural and allied industries.

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONERS

RCRC supports a level of funding sufficient to implement the mandated enforcement programs conducted by County Agricultural Commissioners.

AGRICULTURAL LAND MITIGATION

RCRC supports mandatory mitigation for the conversion of agricultural lands to terrestrial or aquatic habitat when the easement is permanent and/or agricultural land uses are prohibited, which should be required for a period that is commensurate with the amount of time that the agricultural land uses will be precluded, except when land is set aside for habitat or open space to address the impacts of agricultural development. RCRC supports clarifying in statute that the permanent protection of agricultural land is feasible mitigation under the California Environmental Quality Act for the loss of agricultural land. RCRC believes that mitigation lands should be of comparable quality and value as those that were permanently converted. RCRC supports working with agricultural interests, environmentalists, and federal and State officials to develop long-term solutions to mitigate the impacts of large land acquisitions in rural counties.

INSPECTION STATIONS AND MONITORING

RCRC supports funding for the operation of all state and national border inspection stations and monitoring of pesticides and pests in order to assure a safe, fair, and equitable marketplace for California's agricultural industry.

RIGHT-TO-FARM

RCRC supports responsible local right-to-farm ordinances designed to permit and protect the rights of agricultural producers to engage in necessary activities without undue or unreasonable restrictions.

FAIRS

RCRC supports state funding assistance for small- and medium-sized fairs while pursuing both 1) an increase and 2) a sustainable funding stream in order to preserve under-resourced fairs. RCRC also supports increased flexibility in the governance structure of fairs so they may operate in a more efficient and cost-effective manner. RCRC supports state funding that meets the need to maintain and manage fair facilities that function as emergency operation and community resiliency centers.

WILLIAMSON ACT

RCRC supports State subvention funding to counties to provide compensation for reduced property taxes on lands that have contracts under the Open Space Subvention Act of 1971. RCRC supports exploring possible changes to the program itself including modification of the State's oversight and administrative role in the program, given the lack of foreseeable funding from the State for the program. RCRC supports the ability of individual counties to make the determination of appropriate compatible use on agricultural land within the Williamson Act program.

AIR QUALITY

AIR DISTRICT BOARDS

RCRC supports the establishment of policy by local Air District Boards and opposes the placement of State appointees on local Air District Boards.

CALIFORNIA COMMUNITIES ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SCREENING TOOL

RCRC opposes the use of the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen) as a substitute for a focused risk assessment for a specific area or site, or as the basis for any regulatory, permitting, or land use decisions or studies. RCRC also opposes the sole use of CalEnviroScreen to define Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) for the allocation of Cap-and-Trade auction proceeds, or any other statewide or federal funding programs.

CAP-AND-TRADE

RCRC supports an equitable distribution of Cap-and-Trade funds back to ratepayers. RCRC also supports the development and expansion of Cap-and-Trade funding programs specifically targeted at rural communities. RCRC supports using funds from Cap-and-Trade auctions for projects that will both reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and benefit disadvantaged communities, and supports the use of these proceeds on private, local, state, and federally owned and managed lands.

DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

RCRC supports state and federal funding for Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) to meet their needs for a variety of projects such as water infrastructure, transportation, waste diversion and recycling, and forest and watershed health programs. RCRC supports a definition of DACs that addresses the unique needs and make-up of DACs located throughout the state.

EMISSION STANDARDS

RCRC supports exemptions and extensions for rural counties that do not have the resources to meet regulatory requirements and encourages financial assistance from the California Air Resources Board (ARB) to foster compliance. RCRC supports tailoring regulations to address the quantity of emissions actually generated in rural counties. RCRC supports an increase in funding for the Carl Moyer Program for rural counties without the requirement for matching funds.

INCENTIVE-BASED PROGRAMS

RCRC supports the development of state programs that offer incentives to entities that voluntarily reduce GHG emissions and implement climate adaptation programs including grants, loans, offsets, early action credits and market-based credits trading programs. RCRC supports special incentives for industry sectors that have already made significant GHG emissions reductions and those green industries building operations in areas with the highest rates of unemployment.

IN-HOME WOOD HEATING APPLIANCES

RCRC supports the reduction of emissions from in-home wood heating appliances and State and federal grant programs to upgrade and replace in-home wood heating appliances, including programs funded by Cap-and-Trade auction proceeds.

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

RCRC encourages flexibility for economically disadvantaged and rural areas in state regulatory programs including exemptions and tiered compliance schedules based on appropriate, regulation-specific parameters. RCRC supports a state financial assistance program to enable local agencies to comply with GHG regulations.

STATE AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS

While RCRC opposes applying upwind and more restrictive regulations on the downwind transport-impacted counties, RCRC also encourages ARB to exercise its

authority to ensure that the State Implementation Plan includes sufficient control strategies to attain the State Ambient Air Quality Standards (SAAQS) in all parts of California including areas impacted by intrastate transport of air pollution.

CEQA/NEPA

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

RCRC supports efforts to streamline the CEQA process to strengthen the certainty of required timelines and reduce the risk of litigation delays. RCRC opposes limiting or reducing the authority provided to lead agencies under CEQA. RCRC supports facilitation of early agency and public participation in the CEQA process to allow the lead agency and project proponents to more fully address environmental concerns resulting from a proposed project and to facilitate preparation of a legally adequate environmental document. RCRC supports revising CEQA standards that disfavor or disproportionately burden rural projects.

RCRC supports legislation that limits the circumstances under which a challenge for noncompliance with CEQA can be filed, eliminates awarding of attorney's fees to the plaintiff in CEQA challenges, and specifies that a lead agency does not have a duty to consider, evaluate, or respond to comments received after the expiration of the CEQA public review period. RCRC opposes CEQA-related legislation that would make it more difficult for rural counties and rural residents to access the court system.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA)

RCRC supports a reassessment of the NEPA effort to streamline the environmental review and permitting process, and federal policies that establish reciprocity between NEPA and State environmental laws and regulations, such as CEQA. RCRC supports an expedited NEPA analyses process (or exemption) for categories of projects where experience demonstrates that such projects do not result in a significant impact to the environment. RCRC also supports increasing opportunities for local involvement and changes that provide greater weight to local economic impacts and comments.

WILDFIRE MITIGATION RELIEF

RCRC supports streamlining and exemptions from requirements of CEQA and NEPA for projects that improve forest health, enhance forested watersheds, and mitigate the impacts of catastrophic wildfires including, but not limited to, community fuel breaks, secondary ingress/egress, and removal of dead/dying trees due to drought mortality.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

BUILDING STANDARDS

New Building Standards Code (BSC). RCRC supports tailoring regulations and requirements to local conditions, as well as the ability of a local jurisdiction to delay implementation of costly new code requirements in rural areas for the requisite infrastructure to become cost effective and readily available. RCRC supports efforts to create pathways to waive costly new energy-related BSC requirements on homes rebuilt after wildfires.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Incentives. RCRC supports state and federal incentives as a stimulus to job growth and economic improvement within our communities as long as they are balanced with the importance of ensuring county revenue from sales and property taxes and preserving a county's right to plan and site new growth and development within its jurisdiction. Additionally, RCRC supports a county's right to maintain maximum flexibility and autonomy over the allotment and expenditure of any incentive dollars and exemptions, where appropriate, to matching fund requirements for economically disadvantaged communities.

Military Base Retention and Reuse. RCRC supports incentives for economic reuses that are developed in coordination with the impacted local government(s) should any military base facilities close. RCRC supports the placement of out-of-state realignments at existing California military facilities, as well as the development of new facilities in California as the nation's military strategy modernizes to respond to emerging threats. RCRC supports the swift cleanup of any toxic materials from military bases that have already been closed in previous Base Realignment and Closure rounds to enable their economic reuse prior to any further base closures in California.

Tourism and Recreation. RCRC supports and encourages the promotion of rural California as a travel destination and supports appropriate funding for the infrastructure and service demands created by the influx of visitors such as emergency medical services systems, highway construction and maintenance, zero-emission vehicle charging infrastructure and telecommunications.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. RCRC supports business-led local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) governed and supported by local elected officials and local leaders, the use of demand-driven and data-driven strategies within regional economies and labor markets, and access to employment opportunities, career counseling, and job training programs and services through American Job Centers. RCRC opposes proposals that negatively impact and burden rural small businesses.

EDUCATION

Opportunity & Access. RCRC supports increased access to “concurrent enrollment” for high school students. RCRC supports increasing the utilization of distance learning to improve educational opportunities in rural areas where the appropriate technology is available.

Post-Secondary Institutions. RCRC supports stable and consistent funding for grant programs that fund job training programs as well as providing community colleges with their full share of State funding. RCRC supports the provision of bachelor’s degrees by community colleges in certain subject areas. RCRC supports keeping public higher education affordable and accessible to students from rural, and often economically depressed, areas.

School Transportation. RCRC supports the continued funding of Home-to-School Transportation (HTST) and will work to ensure that State reimbursement rates for services in rural areas are sufficient to meet the need. RCRC supports restructuring the current system of HTST to better allocate this funding based upon need rather than antiquated formulae that no longer reflect the requirements of many districts. RCRC supports creating a system of funding that would stabilize the funding for HTST.

HOMELESSNESS

RCRC recognizes homelessness as a statewide issue and supports policy that provides state and/or federal funding and resources to local governments to more accurately collect data and address the needs of the homeless population in their communities.

HOUSING

Housing Elements. RCRC supports the continued recognition that local jurisdictions are not responsible for housing production, but each must plan for its share of housing needs through appropriate land use designations, zoning, and programs. RCRC supports simplifying the housing element process by allowing counties to self-certify housing elements.

Regional Housing Needs Allocations (RHNA). RCRC supports considering the lack of residential infrastructure and other special considerations of rural communities during the Regional Housing Needs Allocation process. RCRC supports the transfer of assigned housing needs allocations between a county and a consenting city or cities, requiring notice to the allocating entity upon agreement between the jurisdictions. RCRC opposes the use of the Regional Housing Need Allocation process for anything other than high-level housing production planning.

HOUSING FINANCE

Housing Finance and Home Ownership. RCRC supports state programs to finance and ensure affordable housing projects are completed and made available to rural residents. RCRC supports state and federal laws that broaden the opportunities

for local housing finance authorities, non-profit housing entities, and instrumentalities of government to increase homeownership.

Housing Funds. RCRC supports the priority for planning funds to go to local jurisdictions, which can assign the funding and planning functions to other regional agencies. RCRC supports rural county access to infrastructure funds for local improvements.

LAND USE PLANNING

Eminent Domain. RCRC supports the authority of counties to utilize the tools available to manage growth, including eminent domain. RCRC opposes exercising eminent domain by taking private property and transferring it for purposes of private gain or use.

Land Use Planning and Authority. RCRC supports changes to state land use planning policies and process within the existing planning framework and not through the creation of additional layers of law or regulation, which threaten local land use authority. RCRC is opposed to any policy, regulation, or legislation that would infringe on the jurisdictional authority of counties to govern land use within county borders or imposes new programs and responsibilities without funding.

Land Use Planning and Climate Change. RCRC supports the development of technical guidelines by the Office of Planning and Research that set specific, quantifiable GHG emissions standards for CEQA and general plan documents. RCRC supports a collaborative process between state and local agencies in the development of all climate change adaptation strategies related to land use decisions.

RCRC supports the development of state and federal assistance programs to provide data, methods, and financial support to help determine and quantify GHG emissions, which is vital for local governments to be able to address climate change in CEQA and general plan documents.

REGIONAL PLANNING

RCRC supports coordinated regional planning between local agencies to address regional impacts of growth including transportation and other infrastructure, air quality, housing, resource production and protection, and public services. RCRC opposes land use authority being transferred to regional agencies without the consent of the local jurisdictions.

SURFACE MINING AND RECLAMATION

RCRC supports a state training program for local government inspectors and recognition that an inspector with one department is not a conflict to inspect a mining operation of another department.

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

RCRC supports the development of sustainable growth principles incorporating the realities of rural communities and on a scale appropriate to the local communities.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

California Advanced Services Fund (CASF). RCRC supports the continuation of the CASF and reforms to the program that ensure flexibility and timely approval of grants. RCRC supports increased funding to CASF and other programs to upgrade broadband service to unserved and underserved communities to speeds that sustain commerce and economic development in rural areas.

“Dig Once”. RCRC supports a requirement that the State Department of Transportation (Caltrans) notifies entities and organizations that a right-of-way enhancement is to occur whereby broadband conduit could be installed in conjunction with the improvement of the right-of-way.

Emergency Systems. RCRC supports the establishment of a reliable dedicated, nationwide, interoperable public safety broadband network. RCRC supports requiring all telecommunication providers to observe long standing emergency notification protocols for both the national Emergency Alert System and local emergency announcements.

High-Cost A/High-Cost B Funds. RCRC supports the continuation of both the High-Cost A and High-Cost B Funds. RCRC supports efforts to allow High-Cost A funds to be utilized for the deployment of broadband in territories served by small carriers.

Landline Relinquishment. RCRC opposes efforts to enact state policies that would allow legacy phone carriers to relinquish landline telephone service without a carefully crafted regulatory scheme that guarantees basic consumer protections over the replacement technology, including: (1) Equivalent, affordable, and reliable service must be retained; (2) The burden-of-proof towards viable relinquishment must fall upon the carrier with extensive regulatory review and local input; (3) Emergency-related services, including 9-1-1, must be secured in a 24 hours-per-day manner; and, (4) Assurances that monies saved from providing landline-based services are dedicated to upgrade services, including broadband deployment.

Telecommunications Resiliency. RCRC supports efforts to improve the reliability of communications systems, ensure they are resilient, and remain operational even after a loss of power from the electrical grid.

COUNTY OPERATIONS

CANNABIS

Cannabis Activities on Tribal Lands. RCRC supports the involvement of counties in the process to establish compacts allowing tribal entities to enter into an agreement with the State for licensing of cannabis activities, thereby providing a mechanism for tribal participation in the legal market. RCRC supports a compact process that encourages compliance with local land use regulations and includes consultation with local government.

State Cannabis Regulation. RCRC supports the State's implementation of the Medicinal and Adult Use Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act (MAUCRSA) and will continue to advocate maintaining local government's flexibility and authority to address individual community needs through local control measures. RCRC supports solutions that address the needs and challenges of cannabis operations in rural counties. RCRC supports the use of state provisional licenses allowing cannabis applicants to complete local permitting/licensing requirements and ancillary state required environmental permitting prior to annual licensure. RCRC supports streamlined CEQA processes and CEQA exemptions for appropriate cannabis activities. RCRC supports workforce training funding for displaced cannabis businesses/workers that are unable to transition to the new commercial industry.

Federal Legalization. RCRC supports de-scheduling cannabis as a Schedule I Controlled Substance. RCRC supports expanding federal banking laws to allow legally sanctioned cannabis-related businesses to access financial services. RCRC supports federal pathways for interstate commerce. RCRC supports federal initiatives to either repeal or modify the federal prohibition of cannabis and encourages federal recognition of state laws regulating cannabis, including provisions preserving local government land-use authority.

Enforcement. RCRC supports funding targeted to local governments and state agencies for illegal cannabis activity enforcement efforts. RCRC supports more aggressive penalty structures or outcomes that would disincentivize illicit cannabis operations and market activity. RCRC supports efforts to address environmental damage to the public's health and safety from unregulated cannabis activity by a variety of State agencies including traditional state law enforcement agencies. RCRC supports a requirement that State environmental agencies coordinate with local government and tribal governments to ensure uniform application in enforcement efforts.

Taxation. RCRC supports flexible state cannabis tax administration prioritizing cannabis business owners and local economic development efforts. RCRC supports cannabis taxation at levels that would support long-term sustainable funding allocations to the Environmental Restoration and Protection Account and State and Local Government Law Enforcement Account. RCRC supports maintaining the authority for counties and cities to establish a local tax on commercial cannabis businesses.

Data Sharing. RCRC supports local, regional, and statewide agreements that enable effective data sharing to support legal cannabis activities and combat illicit activities.

COUNTY FINANCE

Bond Funds. RCRC supports the efficient and effective use of state bond funds and the maximization of federal funds, as well as geographically equitable distribution of bond funds, accountability for bond fund expenditures, and the incorporation of input from local officials when spending priorities are determined. RCRC supports funding formulas that establish a reasonable minimum amount rather than an amount based on population.

Federal Payments to Schools and County Roads. RCRC supports the timely reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS). RCRC supports adequate funding levels and the development of permanent funding solutions into the future.

Municipal Bankruptcy. RCRC supports the current, long-established policy of unrestricted access to the Chapter 9 process for municipalities. RCRC opposes efforts that interfere, inhibit, or delay a county’s ability to seek bankruptcy protection in order to best manage their fiscal affairs.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes. RCRC supports the reauthorization and continuance of full funding of the Federal Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program and the state PILT program. RCRC supports full funding to counties each budget year, and payment in full for arrearages not paid to counties in past budget years.

Prevailing Wage for Public Works. RCRC supports changes to the methodology for determining prevailing wage requirements to allow consideration for the differences between urban and rural areas.

Property Tax Allocations. RCRC supports efforts – through a state budget augmentation and/or a new statute – that guarantee counties (and cities located within those counties) are made whole when there is insufficient allocation of property taxes due to State-determined formulas. In addition, RCRC supports legislative efforts to allocate property taxes known as “excess Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF)” to cities, counties, and special districts within the county where “excess” property taxes are generated.

Transient Occupancy Taxes (TOT). RCRC supports efforts to collect the appropriate amount of TOT from technology platforms such as “Airbnb.” RCRC opposes any efforts to exempt any taxable lodging sites or travel booking services/agents from the collection and payment of local TOTs. Furthermore, RCRC opposes efforts which would shift the responsibility for imposition and collection of TOTs from local jurisdictions to the State.

User-Based Fees and Assessments. RCRC opposes the expenditure of user-based fees and assessments to finance general or special benefit programs that are not directly related to the service for which the fee or assessment was initially established.

2011 Realignment. RCRC supports the constitutional protections that were enacted in the 2011 Realignment to dedicate funding for the costs of meeting a variety of criminal justice and health and human services program demands. RCRC also supports the continuation of dedicated state revenue streams for local law enforcement programs which are now incorporated into the 2011 Realignment scheme.

ELECTIONS

County Offices. RCRC supports maintaining the existing method for which county offices (i.e. county supervisor, county sheriff, etc.) are elected and opposes any attempt that would require the top-two vote-receiving candidates in the primary election to a run-off in the general election.

LABOR

Collective Bargaining Process. RCRC opposes binding arbitration for public employee wage and benefit disputes where no appeals of an arbitrator's final decision is allowed; mandatory mediation as requested by one or more party when an impasse is reached; mandatory fact-finding or an expanse of mandatory fact-finding to issues outside the immediate scope of an impasse; and, State mandates for the establishment of "ground rules" for the local bargaining process.

County Workforce Responsibilities. RCRC opposes legislative proposals that supersede and interfere with the constitutional duties of county Boards of Supervisors to provide for various terms of employment for their county workforce.

Outsourcing. RCRC opposes limitations on county governments' ability to outsource municipal services to the private sector.

MANDATES

Mandate Reform. RCRC supports reforming the mandate reimbursement process to make it more reliable and timelier for counties.

PERS/PENSION

Public Employees' Retirement. RCRC supports efforts to further reform pension benefits administered by the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) and other California public pension systems that would help protect the long-term solvency of California's public pension systems and local entities while maintaining competitive pension benefits for county employees. RCRC believes federal and state funding should be provided for on-going unfunded pension and Other Post-Employment Benefit liabilities for retired county employees whose employment stems from federal and/or state grant programs.

TAXES

Resource-Based Fees. RCRC opposes the use of resource-based fees to balance the state budget.

TRIBAL RELATIONS

Agreements. RCRC supports the requirement for judicially enforceable agreements between tribes and local jurisdictions.

Construction and Expansion. RCRC supports requiring tribal governments that seek to construct or expand a casino or other business that would impact off-reservation land to involve consultation with the county government in the planning process.

Federal Acknowledgement. RCRC supports involvement of local government in tandem with existing local tribal governments, and the public when working toward the restructuring of the way the federal government formally acknowledges an Indian tribe. Additionally, RCRC supports connecting any new federal acknowledgement process to any new Fee-to-Trust process such that the two both share a level of local government involvement.

Fee-to-Trust. RCRC supports legislation that would allow tribes to acquire additional land outside their current trust land in a process that requires community input and does not result in a loss of tax revenue or change in land use. RCRC supports maintaining the existing right of the county, state, and any interested or harmed party to gain standing to comment or sue over a trust application.

Local Business Equality. RCRC supports tax parity between tribal businesses and local businesses to ensure fairness in revenue generation within counties. RCRC supports coordinated economic development planning between tribal governments and local governments.

Mandatory Mitigation. RCRC supports a requirement that future Indian Gaming compacts and Fee-to-Trust applications provide for full mitigation of local impacts, including infrastructure load and local law enforcement issues from gaming and other infrastructure impacts from tribal activities. RCRC supports full funding of the Indian Gaming Special Distribution Fund or alternative funding source for full funding of local mitigation to provide badly-needed revenues to the counties and other local government entities affected by tribal activities on non-taxable land.

Essential Services Coordination. RCRC supports cooperation and collaboration between counties and tribal entities regarding essential public services within tribal lands including firefighting, public safety, and emergency medical services. RCRC supports the use of MOUs, agreements, and mutual aid as mechanisms to establish coordinated essential services.

Tribal Gaming Compacts. RCRC supports the inclusion of GHG mitigation strategies in all new and renegotiated tribal gaming compacts as well as compliance with all other environmental regulations in all new and renegotiated tribal gaming compacts.

WORKERS COMPENSATION

RCRC supports reducing premiums, minimize costs, manage claims, and ensuring that injured workers are properly compensated and able to return to work in a speedy manner.

ENERGY

BIOMASS

RCRC believes that biomass facilities play a key role in forest health and wildfire risk reduction activities. As such, RCRC supports incentives that would encourage biomass-to-energy usage including the creation of more opportunities for biomass co-generation in rural counties. RCRC supports the extension of current biomass long-term contracts to keep existing facilities open and the development of new, smaller biomass facilities to respond to local power and vegetation management needs. RCRC supports the use of forest as well as agricultural biomass at conversion facilities. RCRC supports the broadest possible definition of biomass for use in any renewable energy standard at the state or federal levels. RCRC supports a full life cycle analysis when determining the air quality standards for biomass power generation plants.

POWER OUTAGES

RCRC acknowledges the need for strategic and thoughtful implementation of public safety power shut-off (PSPS) events as a last resort to avoid ignition of catastrophic wildfires during extreme fire hazard conditions. RCRC similarly understands the role that Fast Trip outages (called Enhanced Powerline Safety Settings by PG&E and Fast Curve by Southern California Edison) play in avoiding wildfire ignitions. RCRC believes utilities should dramatically reduce the scope and frequency of PSPS events and Fast Trip outages as those entities make infrastructure improvements to reduce the risk of wildfire ignition. RCRC opposes the use of PSPS events and Fast Trip outages in lieu of implementing robust, immediate steps to harden infrastructure in and around high fire hazard severity zones throughout California. RCRC supports direct and consistent communication between utilities and local governments to identify and mitigate impacts on critical facilities, vital operations, and vulnerable populations before, during and after PSPS events and Fast Trip outages. RCRC supports expeditious planning and implementation of infrastructure improvements and hardening by utilities to significantly reduce the likelihood of Fast Trip outages.

ENERGY RELIABILITY

RCRC believes all Californians deserve safe, affordable, and reliable electricity and that all of those attributes must be achieved simultaneously. To achieve this, RCRC

supports planning, communication, and execution of projects by utilities to ensure the reliability of electrical service to all residents, especially prioritizing projects for those customers who experience the greatest number of electrical disruptions. RCRC supports efforts to improve reliability and resiliency of the electrical grid and to minimize and mitigate the impacts of planned and unplanned power outages on rural communities. RCRC supports strategic the deployment of microgrids and remote grids that can serve to improve energy reliability and resiliency and reduce the overall risk of wildfire.

ELECTRICAL SERVICE DELIVERY

RCRC believes that community growth and economic development depend on the ability to timely provide basic services, including power and water. RCRC supports quick response by utilities to customer requests for service, providing power to new development, and meeting increased demands created by the state's environmental policies.

BACK TO BASICS

RCRC supports the recognition that achievement of California's environmental objectives, including electrification and decarbonization depend upon the ability of the state and utilities to provide basic necessities like safe, affordable, and reliable energy and water.

REBATES AND TAX EXEMPTIONS

RCRC supports state incentives in the placement of new renewable power generation facilities as long as they are not detrimental to county or other local government revenue streams.

RENEWABLE PORTFOLIO STANDARD

RCRC supports recognition of hydroelectric, biomass, and geothermal power as renewable and clean/zero-carbon energy sources under the state's renewable portfolio standard and clean energy policies.

FOREST AND PUBLIC LANDS STEWARDSHIP

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

RCRC supports a broader use of state-funded limited term conservation easements as opposed to permanent easements.

LAND ACQUISITION

RCRC supports the following prerequisites to any conservation acquisition: protection of property rights; willing buyer/willing seller; preservation of local land use authority; and the maintenance of productive working landscapes consistent with local land use plans. RCRC supports notifying the local government that may be

impacted when a conservation acquisition, in either fee title or an easement, is being considered.

FIRE SUPPRESSION

RCRC supports:

- Utilizing round-the-clock wildland fire suppression efforts by all fire suppression agencies when appropriate, including the USDA Forest Service (USFS).
- Expedited efforts to suppress wildfires on federally managed lands during high fire threat conditions.
- Implementing a system of accountability when federal fire suppression efforts do not align with established federal fire suppression policies.
- Integrating local knowledge and ecology into fire suppression strategies for federally managed lands.
- Collaboration by federal land managers on local community wildfire prevention plans (CWPPs).

FOREST RESILIENCE

Forest Carbon. RCRC supports the development of comprehensive and cooperative federal and state programs and strategies to reduce carbon emissions from forested lands and preserve forest carbon sequestration. RCRC supports the development of a complete forest carbon inventory, as well as immediate fuels management and fire prevention projects as a vital component of the state's climate adaptation strategy.

Oak Woodlands. RCRC supports the conservation of oak woodlands but strongly believes that local planning authorities should control the protection of oak woodlands in areas of oak woodland scarcity, not through a state legislative mandate.

Timber Harvesting on Private Lands. RCRC opposes additional requirements that would further increase the cost of Timber Harvesting Plans (THPs) or make the approval process more onerous. RCRC supports efforts to reduce or streamline the regulations on private forest owners for vegetation management work for fire prevention. RCRC supports an increase to the diameter limit of existing THP exemptions for such purposes.

Tree Mortality. RCRC supports state and federal funding, as necessary and appropriate, for the continued removal and utilization of dead and dying trees. RCRC supports comprehensive state and federal technical support for counties that experience high levels of tree mortality as a result of ongoing drought conditions.

Wildfire and Forest Resilience. RCRC supports realistic policy and regulatory reforms that balance environmental protection with the preservation of life and property and that lead to better mitigation of wildfires on federal, state, and private lands. RCRC supports finding solutions that will better protect our communities and the environment from the catastrophic effects of wildfire including detriments to air and water quality, loss of habitat, forced evacuations, and other devastating environmental and societal losses.

RCRC supports the prioritization of community fuels treatment projects by federal land managers to safeguard communities near federal lands from the impacts of wildfire, including:

- Creating fuel breaks around existing, established communities that are adjacent to federally managed lands. These fuel breaks should create at least 500 feet of defensible space between the impacted communities and federally managed lands.
- Complete and maintain defensible space on federally managed lands adjacent to local ingress and egress routes.
- Where a home is less than 100 feet from federally managed lands, the federal land manager shall complete and maintain defensible space on the adjacent federally managed lands, up to a 100-foot radius from the home.
- Permitting private landowners to complete defensible space work onto all federally managed lands when necessary for wildfire prevention efforts.

RCRC supports permanent, robust, sustained state investment in forest resilience and wildfire prevention programs. RCRC supports funding commensurate with the wildland management and fire suppression needs of federal land managers. RCRC supports an increase in state and federal financial resources being put toward prevention either in grants to aid local agencies in the management of forestlands including preparation of fire management plans, or in direct dollars spent towards “on-the-ground” projects. RCRC supports state assistance for small communities in applying for competitive forest health grants. RCRC supports federal funding for home hardening and community safeguarding on and near federally managed lands.

RCRC supports expansions, including diameter limit increases, to existing exemptions from timber harvest plans for wildfire prevention vegetation management. Additionally, RCRC supports other practices to improve forest management and reduce wildfire risk within California’s forests, including the use of grazing in appropriate circumstances as another tool to reduce the risk of wildfire. RCRC supports utilizing tribal ecological knowledge to support federal and state wildland management efforts. RCRC supports the use of prescribed fire and managed fire by federal land managers, during appropriate conditions, as tools to prevent high severity wildfires.

INSURANCE

Homeowners Insurance in High Fire Risk Areas. RCRC supports a collaborative approach between the state, insurance providers and policyholders to develop a comprehensive program encouraging insurers to write policies in high wildfire risk areas where community wildfire risk mitigation programs meet agreed-upon standards. The approach should use the best available wildfire mitigation science and wildfire risk modeling to determine mitigation strategies for homeowners.

RCRC supports policies that require insurers to offer rate reductions to homeowners that implement specified home hardening and defensible space mitigations to improve the wildfire resilience of their homes.

RCRC supports state-funded programs to aid socially vulnerable homeowners with home retrofits and defensible space efforts in order to mitigate individual and community wildfire risk, including mitigation efforts necessary to meet state or federal programs designed to increase insurance affordability and availability.

RECREATION/TOURISM

Monuments. RCRC supports changes to the current monument designation system so that the creation of national monuments requires the approval and/or the oversight of Congress to allow for local government, tribal governments, and public input prior to designation.

Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV).

RCRC supports the collaborative efforts of the OHV stakeholders' roundtable to resolve contentious issues. RCRC opposes the requirement for a local match in the OHV grant program.

PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT

RCRC supports a strong relationship with the federal government to integrate county policy into federal land management decisions and the involvement of local government in the public land use planning decisions at the earliest possible time. RCRC supports the emphasis on partnerships with local government, tribal governments, communities, and organizations demonstrated in the Forest Plan Revision process.

RCRC supports increased funding for public land management agencies to address deferred maintenance of infrastructure in forests, national parks, and reserves that rural counties depend on for tourism and recreation-based economies.

SPECIAL LAND USE DESIGNATION

RCRC supports multiple-use land designations for national forests and other federal lands. Where special land-use consideration is desirable, RCRC supports a five criteria evaluation: 1) Designations must be supported by local governments; 2) The permissive tools of land management must be capable of preserving and protecting the landscape's natural features in perpetuity including protection from wildfire and disease and insect infestation; 3) Designations must be generally consistent with historical and current use; 4) Designations must contribute to the future anticipated demand for national forest and federal land uses; and, 5) A balance of diverse uses must be maintained within a reasonable geographic vicinity.

STATE OWNED LAND

RCRC supports reform of the current state land acquisition system, including a thorough analysis of existing holdings, that prioritizes consistency with local land use

plans, stewardship of state lands for wildfire resilience and watershed health, and cooperation with local authorities and tribal governments, based upon criteria developed in accordance with each agency's mission, goals and available resources.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Emergency Medical Services. RCRC supports direct participation by rural county supervisors in any Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) proposal affecting the delivery of emergency medical services regardless if the county is serviced by a single county Local EMSA or a multi-county Regional EMSA (REMSA). RCRC supports adequate and continual State General Fund support for the REMSAs to ensure uniform levels of emergency medical care are available to residents and non-residents of rural areas.

FOSTER CARE

RCRC supports programs that assist our foster youth with housing, employment, medical care, and education assistance as they transition to emancipation. RCRC supports state-provided services and opportunities reasonably available to other youth in California. Additionally, RCRC supports funding to counties to recruit and retain foster and relative caregiver parents.

HEALTH CARE

Access to Health Care. RCRC supports incentives and programs that train, recruit, and retain health, dental and mental healthcare professionals to provide services in rural areas. RCRC also encourages cooperation and communication between state agencies, offices, departments and boards, as well as the Legislature, federal agencies and county health advocacy organizations to affect this ultimate goal.

RCRC also supports policies that require private and public health plans to offer comprehensive, affordable care to rural county residents, and establish reimbursement parity between rural medical providers and those in other areas of the state. RCRC supports cooperation between providers, insurers, appropriate state departments, the California public pension systems, and other stakeholders in the rural health community to develop incentives and guidelines for health insurance coverage in rural areas.

Behavioral Health. RCRC supports counties having flexibility to design and implement behavioral health services that best meet the needs of their local communities. RCRC supports adequate state funding to counties to continue provide these essential behavioral health services.

County Medical Services Program. RCRC supports ongoing safeguards to realignment and other county funding streams and the continuation of the County Medical Services Program. RCRC opposes any healthcare coverage expansion that

would lead to an increase in the scope of Welfare and Institutions Section 17000 obligations on counties.

Federal Health Care Funding. RCRC supports federal funding that ensures rural residents have equal access to the benefits provided under the Affordable Care Act.

Health Plan Coverage Areas. RCRC supports mandatory inclusion of rural California in health insurance plan coverage areas, including contracts with local, accessible medical providers for timely care delivery, including necessary specialized care.

Illegal Drugs. RCRC supports funding from federal and state sources to help counties combat illegal drug production and provide services for substance use disorder treatment. RCRC also supports efforts and prevention strategies that specifically focus on decreasing opioid misuse, overdoses, and death.

Medical Injury Compensation Reform Act. RCRC supports the current Medical Injury Compensation Reform Act law as any significant change will establish an increase in medical liability insurance rates, and thereby reduce access to healthcare for patients in rural and underserved areas.

Rural Hospitals. RCRC supports allowing small and rural critical access hospitals to directly hire physicians. Additionally, RCRC supports state and federal efforts to fully staff and finance rural hospital operations including capital and seismic-retrofitting needs.

Telemedicine. RCRC supports additional federal advancements, policy changes, and funding mechanisms regarding the expansion of telemedicine and other emerging medical technology, such as paramedicine. RCRC supports state and federal funding for programs that promote quality medical education and treatment in rural areas through the use of appropriate technology, where it is available.

REALIGNMENT

RCRC supports local flexibility in the administration and implementation of programs funded by realignment. RCRC supports adequate funding and appropriate distribution of realignment funds to ensure that counties can continue to meet their legal obligations for providing Health and Human Services. RCRC supports an evaluation of potential transfers of programs that may be better administered and funded at the State level. RCRC opposes state and/or federal funding reductions that shift responsibility for services, administration or fiscal support to rural counties.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Child Support Services. RCRC supports a child support funding allocation methodology that ensures sufficient resources and flexibility to maintain and meet the unique needs of rural local child support agencies (LCSAs). RCRC supports

policies that promote consistent payment to families through strong LCSA child support and distribution systems.

Child Welfare Programs. RCRC supports the simplification of program enrollment processes, the integration of children/youth services and the closure of the gaps between the stand-alone programs. RCRC opposes funding cuts to the array of local child welfare services available to at-risk infants, children, and youth. RCRC supports local flexibility in the administration of these programs to allow for situations unique to rural counties.

Short Term Residential Therapeutic Program. RCRC supports the licensing/renewal process for Short Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) include consultation with the County the facility resides in by the California State Department of Social Services to ensure the STRTP is in compliance with the terms for state licensure.

Food Access. RCRC supports innovative programs and state and/or federal financial incentives that increase food access in underserved and rural communities. Additionally, RCRC supports policies that address food deserts and create strong regional food and farm systems.

Human Trafficking. RCRC supports coordination among law enforcement, victim service providers and non-governmental organizations to develop innovative strategies and response tools to help combat human trafficking. Additionally, RCRC supports resources that facilitate training and education for law enforcement, teachers and students, and other governmental entities on how to properly identify and manage occurrences of human trafficking in their communities, especially in smaller or rural counties which often have limited staff and access to resources.

Local First 5 Commissions. RCRC supports efforts that sustain the local First 5 Commissions' focus on the prenatal-to-five age groups and protect the California Children and Families Act (Proposition 10) revenue sources for this distinct purpose. RCRC opposes any proposal that would restrict the authority of local First 5 Commissions to determine and approve all local Proposition 10 funding distributions. RCRC opposes any budget borrowing or taking of funds from local First 5 Commissions.

VETERANS' SERVICES

County Veterans Service Officer Funding. RCRC supports full funding of the County Veterans Service Officer offices that provide assistance and outreach to California's veterans.

Veterans Access to Services. RCRC supports ensuring veterans have access to the services and benefits to which they are entitled including housing, healthcare, employment, education and training, and community reintegration assistance. RCRC also supports changes to the law that would allow specialized training completed

during military service to qualify as training for non-military employment, where appropriate.

Veterans Specialized Training Funding. RCRC supports full funding for state veterans' programs, especially those that draw down a federal match. Additionally, RCRC supports county efforts to have full flexibility in creating opportunities and giving assistance to veterans in their communities, such as low or no-cost permitting for construction or business licensing.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Prison and Jail Health. RCRC opposes proposals that allow the state prison system to establish release policies for inmates in need of medical, mental health, substance abuse, or social services without commensurate local funding, consistent and appropriate discharge planning, coordination/cooperation with county Health and Human Services staff, and the assurance of local treatment capacity. RCRC supports the concept of ensuring that the application processes of inmates eligible for State Medi-Cal and/or other Health and Human Services programs funded by the state or the federal government are completed before the time of release.

RCRC supports the expansion of the use of telehealth and other distance health mechanisms by county facilities to reduce costs and protect sheriff and local correctional officers and the public by minimizing or avoiding the transportation of inmates to healthcare facilities.

Safe and Secure Local Detention Facilities. RCRC supports state efforts to provide a funding mechanism and/or funding sources that provide financial assistance to counties to construct new or rehabilitate existing local jail facilities. RCRC also supports establishing funding streams that provide rural counties the ability to compete for State funds within low-population groupings.

Social Services. RCRC supports full state funding for social services, mental health, and other health programs for state prison inmate parolees, as well as full funding for social services provided to inmate families, rather than allowing those services to fall to counties.

COURTS

Court Case Funding. RCRC supports continued state funding of the extraordinary costs of major homicide trials in rural counties and for court cases that have been initiated by the State of California in rural counties.

Fines and Fees. RCRC opposes elimination of criminal justice administrative fees as well as other court-related fines or penalties without an ongoing, sustainable backfill to replace associated county revenue loss. RCRC supports the evaluation of

the adequacy of revenue collections and revenue backfills as they relate to county trial court funding fine and forfeiture Maintenance of Effort obligations.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

RCRC supports continued and appropriate state funding to counties for public safety programs and opposes efforts which place additional pressure on the county criminal justice system. RCRC supports efforts to reform our state's bail system, provided those reforms do not impose new, unfunded costs.

DISTRICT ATTORNEYS

Legal Costs. RCRC supports state funding for counties' district attorneys and public defenders for the cost of prosecuting/defending serious/violent felonies that have allegedly been committed at state prison facilities. RCRC also supports additional resources for counties, where there is a significant state prison population, to address the costs of detaining persons awaiting trial for crimes allegedly committed while in state prison.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Disaster Funding. RCRC supports full funding of disaster relief for all eligible counties and opposes any changes to, or limitations upon, the eligibility for receipt of disaster costs. RCRC opposes tying county land use processes and decision-making to disaster relief funding. RCRC supports a return to state assistance for the local portion of the costs of state or federally declared disasters.

RCRC supports tying changes to the current system of enhanced reimbursement for disaster funding that require amendments to a county general plan to the timing of each county's regular update of its general plan, rather than to a specific date. As to fire disaster specifically, RCRC opposes any requirement for enhanced reimbursement for fire disaster that mandates a central countywide fire authority or classifies volunteer or tribal firefighters differently than professional firefighters.

RCRC supports state tax relief for those individuals and businesses who have losses due to disaster. However, RCRC does not support any waiver or shifting of local tax revenues due to disasters.

Volunteer Firefighting. RCRC supports the right of counties to utilize volunteer firefighters and volunteer fire departments as the official structural fire protection resource for any areas within their counties. RCRC opposes any legislation or changes to regulations that would disadvantage any county that utilizes volunteer units. Additionally, RCRC supports the usage of volunteers as part of a mutual aid system, and encourages state and federal firefighters and land management agencies responsible for firefighting to recognize local volunteer firefighters as partners.

JUVENILE JUSTICE

2020 Realignment of Full-Service Responsibility. In recognition of the shift of full responsibility for the juvenile justice system to county governments, RCRC supports ongoing partnerships with appropriate state entities to ensure counties have the necessary resources, facilities, and capacity to replace the placement options for the highest-need youth previously offered at the Division of Juvenile Justice. RCRC supports local flexibility and cross-county collaboration to ensure that appropriately responsive treatment and placements are available for youth in our care. RCRC supports reasonable and appropriate state oversight with an aim to create and preserve positive youth outcomes. However, additional state oversight should recognize, and not disrupt, the success counties have already demonstrated with prior juvenile justice reforms.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

State Crime Laboratories. RCRC opposes efforts to impose and implement a fee schedule or otherwise transfer costs to counties that use forensic crime laboratories operated by the California Department of Justice.

PROBATION

Early Release. RCRC supports careful assessment of the risk of re-offending before any early release from state custody, and full evaluation regarding rehabilitation and training programs that have been provided while in state custody. RCRC supports full disclosure to counties of results from risk and needs assessment prior to any release. RCRC opposes any proposals to reduce the prison population that do not include additional state resources provided to local governments in anticipation of increased law enforcement and probation supervision costs and a variety of new and complex social services demands.

STATE PRISONS

Prison Closures and Facility Reuse. RCRC supports transparency and legislative oversight for the determination process for state prison closures. RCRC supports incorporating facility conditions, property reuse probability, job loss, economic and community impacts within the evaluation process for prison closure determinations.

RCRC supports pre-closure fiscal and economic assistance to help local agencies to prepare for responding to greater demand for public services resulting from prison closure determinations.

RCRC supports incentives for economic reuses that are developed in coordination with the impacted local government(s) should any prison facilities close. RCRC supports local government revenue backfill to address economic impacts with job loss and mitigate immediate and long-term tax revenue declines resulting from prison closures.

RCRC supports the State's swift cleanup of any toxic and hazardous materials from closed prisons to enable their economic reuse prior to the transfer of the property.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

BEVERAGE CONTAINER RECYCLING

RCRC supports efforts to improve the beverage container recycling program to ensure that residents have access to redemption opportunities to get their deposits back. RCRC believes the program should be flexible enough to timely respond to changing local redemption opportunities and market conditions.

CERTIFIED UNIFIED PROGRAM AGENCIES (CUPAS)

RCRC supports financial incentives for rural counties to operate CUPAs, so that businesses in rural counties do not pay disproportionately high fees. Currently, only those counties with populations of less than 150,000 that were certified after January 1, 2000, receive the Rural CUPA Reimbursement pursuant to Section 25404.8 of the California Health and Safety Code (H&SC). RCRC supports the state additionally funding those rural counties that certified prior to January 1, 2000, in the same amounts as specified in H&SC Section 25404.8 (d). RCRC also supports the reduction of non-essential reporting by CUPAs and a reduction in state administrative fees.

DISPOSAL BANS

RCRC supports advanced statewide planning and infrastructure for convenient identification and recovery of all materials and products prior to banning from California landfill disposal or requiring separate handling or processing. RCRC supports active contributions from manufacturers and retailers to establish programs to cover the costs for disposal, recycling, special handling, and/or any public education required for their end-of-life products, before any such disposal bans are implemented. If less-toxic reusable or refillable alternatives exist for products that are hazardous or toxic, disposal bans may be an appropriate policy rather than expanding collections that subsidize the continued use of such hazardous products.

DISPOSAL MANDATES

RCRC supports appropriate tools for municipalities to achieve statewide waste diversion goals, including extended producer responsibility, an easing of the permitting restrictions for organic waste processes and other solid waste activities, model program guidelines, and increased funding. RCRC opposes regulatory requirements that do not consider existing infrastructure and capacity and the economic feasibility of new facilities, and that do not provide the flexibility for phasing-in various regions and areas of the state, especially in rural counties.

ELECTRONIC AND UNIVERSAL WASTE

RCRC supports the proper disposal of electronic and universal waste through programs that place the cost of compliance on manufacturers and consumers rather than on county-operated landfills or waste management programs.

EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY

RCRC supports producer responsibility for financing and arranging the collection and recycling of their products at end-of-life, preferably through product take-back by the manufacturers/retailers.

FINANCING STATE SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL PROGRAMS

RCRC supports a wide range of options to reform the financing mechanisms for the management of solid waste programs, including: increasing the current tipping fee as a temporary measure; applying new solid waste management fees on aspects of the waste stream that currently have no levies; reforming the programs that CalRecycle manages to limit costs; or, a combination of these options. RCRC opposes an increase in the Tipping Fee or other funding mechanisms for projects and programs that are not part of a direct effort to manage and reduce the overall amount of solid waste.

JURISDICTIONAL COMPLIANCE

RCRC supports using program-based criteria to determine jurisdictional compliance with statutory waste diversion requirements that incorporate rural considerations. RCRC opposes numerical justifications on program implementation that do not include rural considerations.

Regulations implementing state requirements in recycling, composting, hazardous waste and storm water control should consider and as necessary adjust compliance timelines and targets to better match local capacities in rural areas, or make funding available to support such programs.

ORGANICS

RCRC supports robust state funding for infrastructure and capacity building for state-mandated organics waste collection programs. RCRC also supports alternative organic waste collection programs for low population counties as a means to meet state-mandated requirements that recognize the economic and logistical challenges of organic waste recycling in rural areas of low population density.

PERMITTING

RCRC supports “tiered” solid waste facility permitting and operating requirements with reduced administrative and operational requirements that are commensurate with the limited environmental and public health risks associated with small-volume facility operation in low-density population areas.

TRANSPORTATION

AVIATION FUNDING

RCRC supports the continuation of state subsidies for general aviation airports in rural counties. RCRC supports reauthorization and implementation of federal aviation policy at the state level to ensure that California continues to receive and dedicate investments to support commercial and general aviation airports.

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

RCRC opposes the use of state transportation funds as an incentive or reward for adoption of prescribed land use principles and development plans by local governments. RCRC also opposes the diversion of dedicated transportation funds for housing and development purposes.

FEDERAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION ACT

RCRC supports a surface transportation policy focused on preservation and maintenance of the existing highway system including the secondary or rural highway network, and connectivity between local, regional, and statewide transportation systems. RCRC supports increased funding levels for the reauthorization of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act and dedicated revenues for locally-owned bridges and high-risk rural roads. RCRC supports funding for public transportation and transit, as well as a sustainable revenues source to ensure the Highway Trust Fund is adequately funded and remains solvent. RCRC supports an equitable distribution of federal transportation funds to California and increased flexibility for Regional Transportation Planning Agencies as well as streamlining efforts to deliver projects more efficiently and effectively.

RCRC supports the establishment of a National Freight Program to target funding toward projects that help direct the movement of products throughout California and the nation and requiring funding be spent on the farm to market connectors and the roads that serve as alternatives to the Interstate system for large volume freight traffic.

STATE HIGHWAY RELINQUISHMENT

RCRC supports relinquishment of segments of State highways to local entities only when the segment does not negatively impact a vital or primary inter-regional connection or when relinquishment would not disrupt the ability to transport people and goods efficiently from one region to another (i.e. from rural areas into urban areas). Relinquishment should only occur provided the impacted local agencies can absorb the ongoing costs of the segment.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

RCRC supports the retention of a dedicated funding source at the local, state, and federal level for transportation programs to help maintain predictable annual revenues to enable rational long-term planning and decision making at the local,

regional and state level. RCRC supports distribution formulas that recognize a statewide transportation network which includes rural highways, roads and bridges, and the disproportionate cost associated with rural roadway maintenance. RCRC supports exploring alternate funding structures to either replace or supplement the existing excise tax on motor vehicle fuels using sound data as it relates to the concerns and behavior of rural motorists.

Additionally, RCRC supports efforts to address prevailing wage requirements and contracting rules that have an increased cost on rural agencies.

WATER AND WILDLIFE

DROUGHT RELIEF

RCRC supports modification of requirements that hinder conservation of currently stored water and that add flexibility to the operation of the state's and federal water system while maintaining California's water right priority system. RCRC opposes state policy that requires counties to assume responsibility of failing water systems over the responsibility held by system operators and state agencies.

FLOOD CONTROL

Central Valley Flood Protection Plan. RCRC supports the development of regional plans to implement the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan that will present the local agencies' and public's perspectives of flood management, and contain a prioritized list of feasible projects that need to be implemented to reduce flood risks in each region.

Development in Flood Prone Areas/Floodplain Mapping. RCRC supports federal funding for the continued updating of Federal Emergency Management Agency maps, supplemented by state maps, to assist local governments in better understanding the flood risks from reasonably foreseeable flooding.

Flood Control Funding. RCRC supports significant new state and/or federal investments in California's flood control infrastructure including funding from the State General Fund and the issuance of General Obligation or Revenue Bonds, before the state attempts to impose cost sharing fees/taxes. RCRC opposes the reduction and/or elimination of the state share of local flood control subventions and supports the reimbursement of past unpaid subventions to local government and local agencies. RCRC supports the use of easements and other beneficial mechanisms to landholders that allow the use of flood-prone and floodable property for local groundwater recharge.

National Flood Insurance Program. RCRC supports the creation of a new agricultural flood hazard area under the National Flood Insurance Program that allows for replacement and reinvestment in agricultural production, storage, and

processing buildings and commercial and community structures in established agricultural areas and rural communities.

WATER

Assurances/Water Rights/Area of Origin. RCRC opposes any programs or facilities implemented or constructed, and intended to improve Delta conditions, such as the Delta Plan or California WaterFix, that result in redirection of unmitigated, adverse impacts to the counties and watershed of origin. RCRC supports assurances to upstream water right and water entitlement holders that the operation of the State Water Project (SWP) and Central Valley Project (CVP) will ensure a stable supply of water to meet the needs of those areas upstream while also serving export interests and meeting requirements in the Delta. RCRC opposes requiring areas upstream from the Bay-Delta to mitigate impacts to the Bay-Delta that have been caused by the construction and operation of the SWP and CVP. RCRC opposes the application of regulatory authority to senior water-right holders or water users relying on area of origin water rights.

Fees/Taxes. RCRC supports cost apportionment for the California WaterFix and California EcoRestore programs based on benefits received, with public trust and other public benefits paid for by General Obligation bond proceeds and/or state and federal general tax revenues. RCRC opposes general fee authority for any administrative entity including the Delta Stewardship Council.

Groundwater. RCRC supports the management of groundwater at the local level. RCRC supports adequate state and federal technical and financial assistance for local agencies in order to either remediate groundwater overdraft or maintain groundwater levels at a safe yield. RCRC supports recharge as a beneficial use when done in accordance with an adopted Groundwater Sustainability Plan. RCRC supports the adoption of county ordinances to protect groundwater against overdraft from out-of-county exports.

Integrated Regional Water Management. RCRC supports state and federal funding assistance to regions so they can leverage local dollars to develop and implement Integrated Regional Water Management Plans.

Seawater and Brackish Water Desalination. RCRC supports seawater and brackish groundwater desalination where it is a viable option. Additionally, RCRC supports the streamlining of the approval process for these projects, and state and federal funding for needed research.

Urban Water Conservation/Agricultural Water Use Efficiency. RCRC supports flexible, incentive-based state and local urban water conservation and agricultural water use efficiency programs that are designed and implemented by locally-elected or appointed officials.

Water Infrastructure. RCRC supports all cost-effective means of increasing California's water supply that are consistent with these Policy Principles. RCRC

supports significant new state and federal investment in our statewide infrastructure to help increase regional self-sufficiency for all regions of the state. RCRC supports the development of additional proposed surface storage projects if they are determined to be both feasible and economical. RCRC supports the “beneficiary pays” principle, meaning that beneficiaries who directly benefit from a specific project or program should pay for their proportional share of the costs of the project or program.

Water Recycling. RCRC supports increased utilization of recycled water and continued state and federal support through appropriate technical and financial assistance. RCRC supports crediting water that is developed through recycling toward local water use reduction goals.

Water Rights. RCRC supports the state’s existing water right and water right priority system.

Water Transfers. RCRC generally supports locally-approved, short-term water transfers between willing buyers and willing sellers as one way to meet short-term needs and maximize existing resources. RCRC supports long-term transfers that involve permanent fallowing/retirement of non-drainage impacted agricultural lands or provide for the substitution of groundwater for transferred surface water if they are designed with consideration of how the transfer might affect third parties, local groundwater resources, and the social and economic conditions in the county. RCRC supports use of water transfer revenues to provide local benefits, such as: flood protection; water supply; water conservation; water quality; maintenance of low water costs for local water users; and environmental enhancement.

WATER QUALITY

Federal Jurisdiction. RCRC opposes any attempt via legislation, rulemaking, or policy issuance to change the Clean Water Act (CWA) to expand federal jurisdiction over wetlands and other water bodies with no physical nexus to federal navigable waters. RCRC supports efforts to streamline both the CWA and the federal Safe Drinking Water Act.

Non-Point Source and Wastewater Discharges. RCRC supports the scientific evaluation of water quality impacts from agricultural discharge and storm water runoff. RCRC supports efforts to reduce discharge monitoring and permit compliance requirements that do not provide significant improvement in water quality. RCRC supports the treatment and use of non-potable water to enhance potable water supplies for beneficial uses. However, we do not support state or federal mandates on businesses or local governments to reuse wastewater.

Onsite Wastewater Systems. RCRC opposes new regulatory requirements that restrict the use of onsite wastewater systems unless there is scientific evidence that such restrictions are needed to provide meaningful benefits to water quality.

Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). RCRC supports the integration of the TMDL process with a local watershed approach to water quality improvement,

combined with sustainable levels of state and federal funding and/or technical assistance. RCRC opposes multiple layering of TMDLs within watershed regions. RCRC opposes an exemption from CEQA for TMDLs.

Watershed Management. RCRC supports local voluntary community-based collaborative watershed management planning and implementation as well as state and federal projects that improve forest watershed health.

Wetlands. RCRC opposes any proposed expansion of wetlands regulations by the state that inappropriately expand California’s jurisdiction or results in duplicative permitting or monitoring requirements.

WILDLIFE

Endangered Species Protection. RCRC supports efforts to streamline and modernize the state and federal Endangered Species Acts (ESAs), and the state’s Fully Protected Species Act, as well as efforts to clarify and simplify the process to de-list species from a protected status. RCRC supports an ecosystem approach as opposed to a species driven approach, in order to help balance species protection with the economic and social consequences that may result from such protection, including compliance costs. RCRC supports increased public collaboration throughout the development of “reasonable and prudent” measures during the ESA consultation, the NEPA and the CEQA processes.

RCRC opposes efforts to broaden critical habitat designations through amendments to the ESA. RCRC also opposes a baseline approach to the economic analysis for critical habitat, and instead supports an approach that considers all fiscal impacts related to the listing and subsequent critical habitat designations for a species.

RCRC supports revisions to state law to lessen the economic impacts of predation by state-listed endangered species on livestock and native wildlife by authorizing full and prompt compensation from the state to individuals for animal depredation on private and public lands due to predation by state-protected species.

Invasive Species. RCRC supports state and federal funding to increase public awareness of invasive species as well as to facilitate their removal and reduce harmful economic and environmental impacts that result from the spread of these species.

USDA/California County Cooperative Wildlife Services. RCRC supports legislation and regulatory actions that allow wildlife management tools and/or methods that have proven effective; collaborative efforts to fund and complete CEQA documentation for all Wildlife Services in California; and restoration of state matching funds for county participation in federal Cooperative Wildlife Services programs.

Wildlife Corridors. RCRC supports consideration of identified wildlife corridors in the development approval process to reduce the impacts of wildlife displacement.

RCRC opposes identification of wildlife corridors that results in regulatory impacts on private landowners.

Wildlife Management. RCRC supports local, state, and federal wildlife management programs, as well as efforts by the County Agricultural Commissioners, to disseminate wildlife management educational information to the public. RCRC supports federal and State funding for wildlife management programs and continued research on wildlife and predator management. RCRC supports state funding for the hiring and retention of wildlife officers to ensure that both game and non-game species are protected against poaching and highway traffic-related fatalities.