

**Rural County Representatives of California
Board of Directors Meeting
March 26, 2025 – 8:00 a.m.
1215 K Street, Suite 1650
Sacramento, CA 95814**

MINUTES

Call to Order, Determination of Quorum and Self Introductions

Chair, Supervisor Geri Byrne, Modoc County, presided. Present were President and CEO Patrick Blacklock, General Counsel Arthur J. Wylene, and Director of Board Operations, Maggie Chui, clerk. Chair Byrne called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. A quorum was determined at that time. Those members present:

Supervisor

David Griffith
Bill Connelly
Amanda Folendorf
Daurice Smith
Darrin Short
Lori Parlin
Monica Rossman
Rex Bohn
Ryan Kelley
Jen Roeser
Doug Verboon
EJ Crandell
Aaron Albaugh
Robert Poythress
Miles Menetrey
Madeline Cline
Daron McDaniel
Geri Byrne
Rhonda Duggan
Chris Lopez
Anne Cottrell
Sue Hoek
Shanti Landon
Kevin Goss
John Peschong
Bob Nelson
Kevin Crye
Lee Adams
Michael Kobseff
Wanda Williams*
James Gore

County

Alpine
Butte
Calaveras
Colusa
Del Norte
El Dorado
Glenn
Humboldt
Imperial
Inyo
Kings
Lake
Lassen
Madera
Mariposa
Mendocino
Merced
Modoc
Mono
Monterey
Napa
Nevada
Placer
Plumas
San Luis Obispo
Santa Barbara
Shasta
Sierra
Siskiyou
Solano
Sonoma

Matt Hansen
Jill Cox
Dennis Townsend
Mike Holland
Sheila Allen
Gary Bradford

Tehama
Trinity
Tulare
Tuolumne
Yolo
Yuba

Absent

Brian Oneto
Mindy Sotelo
Mike Ziegenmeyer

Amador
San Benito
Sutter

*Attendance via Zoom

Member County Updates and Priorities

Chair, Supervisor Geri Byrne, Modoc County, invited each Board Member to share brief reports on key updates, initiatives, and priorities from their counties. The RCRC Board of Directors heard from the following supervisors:

- Supervisor Darrin Short, Del Norte County, spoke on AB 1014 and requested support for this bill, which would increase local authority to lower speed limits in rural communities.
- Supervisor Ned Coe, Modoc County, spoke on AB 411 and requested support for this bill, which would allow on-farm composting of livestock remains.
- Supervisor Michael Kobseff, Siskiyou County, discussed the new high fire severity maps and the 120-day deadline for adopting the ordinance, and expressed concerns about the unfunded mandate.
- Supervisor Aaron Albaugh, Lassen County, expressed appreciation for the attention to AB 411, particularly in areas affected by predators like wolves and bears. Supervisor Albaugh also noted budget challenges.
- Supervisor Lori Parlin, El Dorado County, spoke about uncertainty around federal Secure Rural Schools and Payment In Lieu of Taxes funding, growing pressure from In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) labor negotiations due to decreased state support, and the impacts of SB 35 streamlining on local land use authority.
- Supervisor Matt Hansen, Tehama County, raised concerns about worsening flood damage due to wildfires, affecting drainage and requiring streamlined permitting processes for property protection.
- Supervisor Monica Rossman, Glenn County, highlighted inadequate support for seniors, as well as difficulties in replacing volunteer fire department equipment due to budget constraints.
- Supervisor Robert Poythress, Madera County, invited supervisors who are interested to attend the Road Charge Technical Advisory Committee meeting taking place in Fresno on April 18th.
- Supervisor Daron McDaniel, Merced County, expressed frustration with slow permitting processes and the lack of local control in rural areas. Supervisor McDaniel also raised concerns about highway speed issues and speed traps.

- Supervisor Miles Menetrey, Mariposa County, shared that ambulance services are recovering from COVID-related staffing issues, as the county deals with challenges like rockslides.
- Supervisor Bob Nelson, Santa Barbara County, emphasized the need to balance streamlined permitting with local control, along with issues in conservation easements and fire protection management.
- Supervisor Chris Lopez, Monterey County, discussed the need for enhanced disaster preparedness and local resilience due to increasing challenges.
- Supervisor David Griffith, Alpine County, shared concerns about funding cuts and the challenges of maintaining infrastructure and services with limited resources, as well as recent experiences with conservation easements.
- Supervisor Jen Roeser, Inyo County, discussed challenges on funding issues for emergency medical services, volunteer shortages, and conflicts with fire departments. Supervisor Roeser also advocated for more local control over wildlife management.
- Supervisor Ryan Kelley, Imperial County, expressed frustration with the Army Corps over a delayed project that has since been resolved. Supervisor Kelley also raised concerns about AB 205 regarding solar projects, and shared that Imperial County is sponsoring AB 1016 and AB 1031 on geothermal resources.
- Supervisor Madeline Cline, Mendocino County, reported issues with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) regarding big rig routes and delays in safety upgrades, and advocated for legislation requiring them to cover the cost of moving utility lines.
- Supervisor Mike Holland, Tuolumne County, spoke about the county's forest thinning project, noting that fire maps do not reflect these efforts, which could lead to rising insurance rates. Supervisor Holland also mentioned the county's work to streamline its development process and ensure safe access to highways.
- Supervisor Rex Bohn, Humboldt County, emphasized the importance of supporting Humboldt County's cannabis products for economic growth.
- Supervisor Dennis Townsend, Tulare County, highlighted recent positive developments with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which provided a payout for flood damages, and progress with the Army Corps regarding water releases and elevation issues.
- Supervisor Doug Verboon, Kings County, raised concerns about IHSS impacting the general fund and the high-speed rail project. Supervisor Verboon also noted struggles with water management and lack of communication with the State Water Resources Control Board, as well as in rebuilding a flood-damaged bridge.
- Supervisor Jill Cox, Trinity County, shared her support for RCRC creating an ad hoc committee to address recruitment and retention, noting her interest in employee satisfaction and work environment aspects that could benefit Trinity County.
- Supervisor Shanti Landon, Placer County, shared details of a solar project, noting that the Conditional Use Permit process led to habitat conservation efforts.
- Supervisor Kevin Crye, Shasta County, emphasized the importance of public comments on AB 205 and urged others to take action to avoid significant financial costs.

- Supervisor Sue Hoek, Nevada County, discussed the ongoing challenges with homeowners' insurance and the importance of rural landline service.
- Gary Bradford, Yuba County, reported strong residential and commercial growth, leading to challenges like school overcrowding. Supervisor Bradford also noted an increased demand for transportation infrastructure and mentioned a safety interchange project facing delays due to Caltrans requiring a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review.
- Supervisor Lee Adams, Sierra County, addressed speed limit issues on state highways in Sierra City and Sierraville, which are exempt from recent laws allowing more local control.
- Supervisor Anne Cottrell, Napa County, emphasized the need for streamlined permitting related to flood and fire prevention and supported exploring best practices. Supervisor Cottrell also highlighted SB 346 on short-term rental revenue tracking, and concerns about SB 707 and SB 239 related to Brown Act requirements.
- Supervisor EJ Crandell, Lake County, shared his recent trip to Washington, D.C., and a follow-up meeting with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is expected. Supervisor Crandell also shared a success story from last year, where a conversation with the Secretary of the California State Transportation Agency led to the installation of traffic devices, emphasizing the importance of continuing to advocate for and follow up on issues.
- Supervisor Sheila Allen, Yolo County, raised concerns about Medicaid funding cuts, IHSS funding, support for volunteer fire departments, and the need for better coordination with auto insurance for fire department reimbursements.
- Supervisor Daurice Smith, Colusa County, reported on a recent solar farm approval and budget challenges, specifically with library funding and tax reallocation.
- Supervisor Bill Connelly, Butte County, discussed CEQA reform, insurance challenges, creek maintenance, and concerns over flood management at the Oroville facility.
- Supervisor Wanda Williams, Solano County, spoke about the consolidation of three fire districts, ongoing work on a Memorandum of Understanding, and battery storage legislation. Supervisor Williams also noted the county's general plan.
- Supervisor James Gore, Sonoma County, discussed the potential impacts of tax cuts, Medicaid cuts affecting funding for indigent care, and changes to municipal bond exemptions.

Public Comment

None

Consent Agenda

- January 8, 2025 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**
- Establishment of Board of Directors Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Public Recruitment and Retention**
- Proposed 2025 RCRC Revised Operating Budget**
- Water Issues Update**

e. California Public Utilities Commission Update

Chair, Supervisor Geri Byrne, Modoc County, called for approval of the above-listed consent agenda items.

Supervisor Michael Kobseff, Siskiyou County, motioned to approve the consent agenda items. Supervisor EJ Crandell, Lake County, seconded the motion. Motion passed with all Supervisors present voting “Aye,” except:

Not Voting: Imperial County

RCRC Chair’s Report

Chair, Supervisor Geri Byrne, Modoc County, welcomed supervisors to the March RCRC Board of Directors meeting. Supervisor Byrne discussed the recent trip to Washington, D.C., where the RCRC delegation advocated for federal priorities during the RCRC Officers’ Fly-In and the National Association of Counties’ Legislative Conference. Each Board Member attending as part of the RCRC delegation had the opportunity to share insights from the trip.

President’s Report

Patrick Blacklock, President and CEO, provided a report on recent activities the organization is engaged in that align with the RCRC Strategic Plan goals, encompassing Equitable Access, Impactful Advocacy, Healthy Communities, and Operational Excellence.

New RCRC staff members, Taylor Kayatta, Deputy General Counsel, and Jason Hansen, Economic Development Officer, were introduced.

Guest Speaker – California Natural Resources Agency

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), addressed the RCRC Board of Directors, presenting CNRA’s programs and his outlook related to water, wildfire resilience, wildlife management, and economic development opportunities.

Following Secretary Crowfoot’s presentation, the RCRC Board of Directors engaged in an extended discussion with him.

June 2025 County of the Chair Meeting Update

Dorothy Poole, Governmental Affairs Operations Manager, and Chair, Supervisor Geri Byrne, Modoc County, presented information about this year’s County of the Chair meeting, which will be hosted by RCRC Chair Byrne in Modoc County from June 25-27, 2025.

State and Federal Legislative Update

Mary-Ann Warmerdam, Senior Vice President Governmental Affairs, provided an update on issues at both the state and federal levels.

At the state level, discussions included an overview of the current legislative landscape, committee hearings, and the State Budget. Governmental Affairs Department Policy Advocates Tracy Rhine, John Kennedy, Eric Will, and Sarah Dukett each provided updates on legislation within their portfolios, including RCRC-sponsored bills.

At the federal level, key issues focused on appropriations and the exclusion of Secure Rural Schools from the federal budget.

Discussion on Energy Matters

John Kennedy, Senior Policy Advocate, and Leigh Kammerich, Policy Advocate, provided an overview of energy topics and led a discussion with the RCRC Board of Directors to gather feedback on energy-related topics, including affordability, new service connection times and delays, and permitting challenges. Feedback was also sought on rising electricity costs, ratepayer programs, electrification barriers, positive experiences with energy developers, and opportunities for counties to engage in energy discussions.

Forest Management and Wildfire Update

Staci Heaton, Senior Policy Advocate, provided an update on legislative efforts and activities across various state and federal agencies. Ms. Heaton discussed federal agency staff changes, administrative actions on forest resilience and timber, efforts to streamline federal land management agencies, and regulations on the five-foot noncombustible zone. Ms. Heaton also covered wildfire mitigation legislation, land use related to wildfire, and the ongoing work of the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force.

Adjournment

Chair, Supervisor Geri Byrne, Modoc County, adjourned the RCRC Board of Directors Meeting at 1:05 p.m.