

**Rural County Representatives of California
Board of Directors Meeting
August 13, 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 8:00 a.m. A quorum was determined at that time. Those members present:

Supervisor

David Griffith
Bill Connelly
Amanda Folendorf
Daurice Smith
Lori Parlin
Monica Rossman
Rex Bohn*
Jen Roeser
Doug Verboon
EJ Crandell
Aaron Albaugh
Robert Poythress
Miles Menetrey
Madeline Cline
Daron McDaniel
Geri Byrne
Rhonda Duggan
Anne Cottrell
Sue Hoek
Shanti Landon
Mindy Sotelo
John Peschong
Kevin Crye
Lee Adams
Michael Kobseff
Wanda Williams
Mike Ziegenmeyer
Matt Hansen
Jill Cox*
Dennis Townsend
Mike Holland

County

Alpine
Butte
Calaveras
Colusa
El Dorado
Glenn
Humboldt
Inyo
Kings
Lake
Lassen
Madera
Mariposa
Mendocino
Merced
Modoc
Mono
Napa
Nevada
Placer
San Benito
San Luis Obispo
Shasta
Sierra
Siskiyou
Solano
Sutter
Tehama
Trinity
Tulare
Tuolumne

Sheila Allen

Yolo

Absent

Brian Oneto

Darrin Short

Ryan Kelley

Chris Lopez

Kevin Goss

Bob Nelson

James Gore

Gary Bradford

Amador

Del Norte

Imperial

Monterey

Plumas

Santa Barbara

Sonoma

Yuba

*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 Michael Kobseff, Siskiyou County, discussed sanctuary county policies, pesticide issues with illegal cannabis grows, the ongoing wolves problem, and opposition to Assembly Bill 263 (Rogers) regarding watersheds. Supervisor Nancy Ogren, Siskiyou County, concurred with Supervisor Kobseff's remarks.
- Supervisor Aaron Albaugh, Lassen County, challenged redistricting efforts affecting the county.
- Supervisor Monica Rossman, Glenn County, discussed Assembly Bill 589 (Gallagher) regarding protective equipment for volunteer fire departments, and the California Department of Veterans Affairs' stand-down procedures.
- Supervisor Lori Parlin, El Dorado County, discussed litigation with the California Department of Public Health on the syringe exchange program.
- Supervisor Amanda Folendorf, Calaveras County, addressed the difficulty of applying for grants to combat invasive mussels.
- Supervisor Robert Poythress, Madera County, discussed transportation concerns and gas tax replacement for transportation infrastructure improvements.
- Supervisor Daron McDaniel, Merced County, raised concerns about Assembly Bill 1441 (Soria) regarding the County of Merced Citizens Redistricting Commission, as well as jail deaths involving gang members.
- Supervisor Geri Byrne, Modoc County, discussed declining community corrections and reduced growth, making it difficult to manage general funds. Supervisor Byrne also talked about Assembly Bill 678 (Lee) regarding homelessness.
- Supervisor David Griffith, Alpine County, expressed local control concerns for group home placement, residential community care, and County Administrative Officer (CAO) recruitment efforts.
- Supervisor EJ Crandell, Lake County, reported on wildfire incidents and the effectiveness of defensible space programs, as well as ongoing issues with the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E).

- Supervisor Madeline Cline, Mendocino County, discussed budget shortfalls and water supply issues due to the Potter Valley Project.
- Supervisor Mike Holland, Tuolumne County, discussed lake management priorities and the invasive mussel issue, budget shortfalls, fire insurance, and staffing needs.
- Supervisor Jen Roeser, Inyo County, discussed redistricting election costs, transportation infrastructure, the reorganization of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and active resource conservation districts grant acceptance issues. Supervisor Roeser also addressed mountain lion management, and emergency medical services issues with volunteer departments.
- Supervisor Doug Verboon, Kings County, discussed SGMA water compliance, county lawsuits, and recreational lakes.
- Supervisor Rhonda Duggan, Mono County, discussed Convict Lake cleanup and USDA reorganization impacts.
- Supervisor Shanti Landon, Placer County, discussed the solar project's impact fees, needle exchange programs, jail medical request for proposal, and an artificial intelligence grant for software to assist with plan check processes.
- Supervisor Kevin Crye, Shasta County, described inadequate healthcare services and alternative custody programs with the City of Redding.
- Supervisor Sue Hoek, Nevada County, discussed electric vehicle fire insurance issues, the invasive mussel issue, fuel break programs, and good neighbor policies. Supervisor Hoek also addressed problems with AT&T and PG&E.
- Supervisor Dennis Townsend, Tulare County, discussed the State Route 99 project and successful transportation collaboration with Madera and Merced Counties. Supervisor Townsend also addressed rural road concerns, as well as a request for federal funding for Farm to Market programs.
- Supervisor Shiela Allen, Yolo County, discussed budget challenges, Medi-Cal cuts, jail medical services, and drought planning.
- Supervisor Mindy Sotelo, San Benito County, discussed hiring a new CAO, a fire district parcel tax, jail medical services, budget issues, vape cartridge disposal legislation, and broadband.
- Supervisor Daurice Smith, Colusa County, discussed county reorganization, hemp cultivation assistance, and agricultural benefits programs.
- Supervisor Anne Cottrell, Napa County, agreed with fellow supervisors from Madera, Tulare, Lake, and Nevada Counties, and also discussed Napa County's junior leadership program.
- Supervisor Rex Bohn, Humboldt County, discussed changing the county's position on Assembly Bill 470 (McKinnor) regarding Carriers of Last Resort, and the challenges with the Eel River.
- Supervisor Jill Cox, Trinity County, discussed jail health services, budget deficits, and water district coordination.
- Supervisor Wanda Williams, Solano County, discussed the county crop report, battery storage ordinances, and Farm to Market funding for rural areas.
- Supervisor Bill Connelly, Butte County, discussed budget cuts, deteriorating healthcare access, jail medical costs, ambulance funding challenges, substance abuse prevention, and fire concerns.

Public Comment

Jim Holmes, Consultant, Pioneer Community Energy, shared that Pioneer Community Energy will be a sponsor of the upcoming RCRC Annual Meeting.

Consent Agenda

- a. **June 27, 2025 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**
- b. **Establishment of Board of Directors Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Predator Species Management**
- c. **RCRC Strategic Plan Mid-Year Update**
- d. **Proposed 2026 Meeting Calendar**

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 Rex Bohn, Humboldt County, seconded the motion. Motion passed with all Supervisors present voting “Aye,” except:

Not Voting: Sutter County

Guest Speaker – County Medical Services Program

Kari Brownstein, Executive Director, County Medical Services Program (CMSP), and Lee Kemper, Planning and Policy Consultant, CMSP, addressed the RCRC Board of Directors with an overview of CMSP’s programs, finances, and current updates.

To assist with CMSP’s presentation, Sarah Dukett, Senior Policy Advocate, provided an overview on HR 1 and recent Medicaid impacts.

Following Ms. Brownstein’s and Mr. Kemper’s presentation, the RCRC Board of Directors engaged in an extended discussion with them.

RCRC Chair’s Report

Chair, Supervisor Geri Byrne, Modoc County, welcomed supervisors to the August RCRC Board of Directors meeting, and thanked everyone for attending last month’s County of the Chair meeting held in her county.

Supervisor Byrne also shared her enthusiasm for the upcoming RCRC Annual Meeting, particularly the Basket Drawing and Auction Dinner, noting that proceeds will benefit several charities in her county.

President’s Report

Patrick Blacklock, President and CEO, provided a brief 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 were introduced to the RCRC Board of Directors: Shayne Pope, GSCA Outside Plant Construction Lead; Susana Jackson, GSCA Financial Planning and Administration Lead; Kyle Zimbelman, GSCA Operational Lead; and, Lauren Ferguson, IT Intern.

Rural County Photo Contest

Chris Egan, Management Analyst, presented the three finalist photos for the RCRC's 9th Annual Rural County Photo Contest to the RCRC Board of Directors for their consideration. The winning photo will be displayed at RCRC's 2025 Annual Meeting and may be used in various marketing materials or work products throughout the next year.

Staff Recommendation

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

Photo "1": Alpine County; Butte County; Lake County

Photo "2": Calaveras County; El Dorado County; Inyo County; Madera County; Mariposa County; Shasta County; Sutter County; Tehama County; Trinity County; Tulare County; Tuolumne County; Yolo County

Photo "3": Colusa County; Glenn County; Humboldt County; Kings County; Lassen County; Mendocino County; Merced County; Modoc County; Mono County; Napa County; Nevada County; Placer County; San Benito County; San Luis Obispo County; Sierra County; Siskiyou County; Solano County

Subsequently, the following winners were announced:

- **Grand Prize Winner** – Photo "3" by Andrew Lincoln, a photo taken in Napa County
- **Second Place Winner** – Photo "2" by Derek Ikeda, a photo taken in Inyo County
- **Third Place Winner** – Photo "1" by Eric Grimm, a photo taken in Mono County

2025 Annual Meeting Overview

Dorothy Poole, Governmental Affairs Operations Manager, and Lorraine Cummings, Client Relations Representative, provided an overview of the RCRC 2025 Annual Meeting, scheduled to occur September 17-19, 2025, in Placer County at the Everline Resort & Spa, in Olympic Valley. The deadlines to provide basket contents for publicity and to drop off the baskets were announced.

State and Federal Legislative Update

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

At the state level, topics covered include Cap-and-Trade, the California Environmental Quality Act, insurance, local control, and State Budget impacts, along with legislation affecting county operations, public safety, water, solid waste, and energy. Sarah Dukett, Senior Policy Advocate, Eric Will, Policy Advocate, and John Kennedy, Senior Policy Advocate, each provided updates on legislation within their portfolios, including bills related to county operations, public safety, water, solid waste, and energy.

At the federal level, key issues focused on Secure Rural Schools, the Farm Bill, rural health, and forest resiliency. The Governmental Affairs Department and select supervisors will be participating in a Payment In Lieu of Taxes Fly-In in September.

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 U.S. Department of Agriculture's administrative actions, including the Roadless Rule rescission, Wood Innovation Grant, and U.S. Forest Service restructure. Ms. Heaton also addressed the release of the Zone 0 draft regulations, the California Department of Insurance's Disaster Model review, and wildfire mitigation legislation.

*Supervisor Kevin Crye, Shasta County, departed the meeting at approximately 11:50 p.m.

California Public Utilities Commission Update

Leigh Kammerich, Senior Policy Advocate, provided an update on the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and RCRC's engagement in proceedings covering energy and communications-related issues. Ms. Kammerich discussed the new CPUC rulemaking that updates telecommunications emergency preparedness requirements and enhances network resiliency in high fire-threat districts.

Report and Update Regarding the Following RCRC Ad Hoc Committees: Williamson Act Ad Hoc Committee; Carrier of Last Resort Ad Hoc Committee; and, Recruitment and Retention Ad Hoc Committee

Mary-Ann Warmerdam provided an update on RCRC's current ad hoc committees: Williamson Act, Carrier of Last Resort (COLR), and Recruitment and Retention.

The Carrier of Last Resort Ad Hoc Committee has met regularly in recent months to review COLR policies, including Assembly Bill 470 (McKinnor), and is expected to hold one final meeting before concluding its work.

The Williamson Act Ad Hoc Committee was reconstituted in June 2025 to provide feedback on Assembly Bill 1156 (Wicks) and has since held multiple meetings.

The Recruitment and Retention Ad Hoc Committee was formed to address growing staffing shortages in local government and will hold its first meeting on August 13th, following the RCRC Board of Directors meeting.

Rural Advancement Institute: Research & Education Focus Areas and Board Member Engagement Activity

RAI Chair Supervisor Aaron Albaugh, Lassen County, RCRC Vice Chair Supervisor Miles Menetrey, Mariposa County, and Maggie Chui, Director of Board Operations/RAI Deputy Executive Director, provided an update on the Rural Advancement Institute's (RAI) current research and educational activities. An engagement activity was conducted for RCRC Board Members to identify priority focus areas for future RAI initiatives.

Following the engagement activity, Supervisor Albaugh announced that the top-ranked focus areas were water (including drought, floods, sites reservoir, water storage, upper watershed, and infrastructure), agriculture/food, and wildfire/wildfire resilience/rebuild. A summary will be provided at a future Board meeting.

Adjournment

Chair, Supervisor Geri Byrne, Modoc County, adjourned the RCRC Board of Directors Meeting at 12:30 p.m.