

**Rural County Representatives of California
Board of Directors Meeting
January 21, 2026 – 9:00 a.m.
1215 K Street, Suite 1650
Sacramento, CA 95814**

MINUTES

Call to Order, Determination of Quorum and Self Introductions

Chair, Supervisor Miles Menetrey, Mariposa County, presided. Present were President and CEO Patrick Blacklock, General Counsel Arthur J. Wylene, and Director of Board Operations, Maggie Chui, clerk. Chair Menetrey called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A quorum was determined at that time. Those members present:

Supervisor

David Griffith
Jeff Brown
Bill Connelly
Amanda Folendorf
Daurice Smith
Darrin Short
Lori Parlin
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
Mindy Sotelo
John Peschong
Bob Nelson
Chris Kelstrom
Lee Adams
Michael Kobseff*
Mitch Mashburn

County

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

Jeff Stephens
Matt Hansen*
Jill Cox
Dennis Townsend
Mike Holland
Shiela Allen
Gary Bradford

Sutter
Tehama
Trinity
Tulare
Tuolumne
Yolo
Yuba

Absent

Monica Rossman
James Gore

Glenn
Sonoma

*Attendance via Zoom

Public Comment

None

Consent Agenda

- a. **December 10, 2025 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**
- b. **RCRC Resolution 26-01: RCRC Board Travel Policy**
- c. **2026 Appointments**

- I. **Designate One Member of the RCRC Board to Serve on the Golden State Natural Resources, Inc. (GSNR) Board of Directors**

The following RCRC Board Member has been designated to serve on the Golden State Natural Resources, Inc. Board of Directors:

Supervisor Geri Byrne, Modoc County

The term will commence on February 1, 2026 and expire on January 31, 2028.

- II. **Designate First Deputy Chair and Second Deputy Chair of the RCRC Board to Serve on the Water and Natural Resources Matters, Regulatory Matters, and Legislative Matters**

The following RCRC Board Members have been appointed to serve as the 2025 First Deputy Chairs and Second Deputy Chairs:

Water and Natural Resources Matters

First Deputy Chair: Supervisor Dennis Townsend, Tulare County

Second Deputy Chair: Supervisor Jen Roeser, Inyo County

Regulatory Matters

First Deputy Chair: Supervisor Rhonda Duggan, Mono County

Second Deputy Chair: Supervisor Monica Rossman, Glenn County

Legislative Matters

First Deputy Chair: Supervisor John Peschong, San Luis Obispo County

Second Deputy Chair: Supervisor Lee Adams, Sierra County

III. Rural Counties' Nominee to Serve on the National Association of Counties' Western Interstate Region Board

The following RCRC Board Member has been nominated for the 2026 role:

Supervisor Rex Bohn, Humboldt County

IV. Appointment of Two Members of the RCRC Board to Serve on the Rural Advancement Institute (RAI) Board

The following RCRC Board Members have been appointed to serve as 2026 RCRC designated directors:

Supervisor Aaron Albaugh, Lassen County

Supervisor Shanti Landon, Placer County

d. RCRC 2026 Investment Policy Renewal

e. RCRC 2021-2026 Revised Pay Rate Schedules

f. Ad Hoc Committee Updates

I. Carrier of Last Resort Ad Hoc Committee: Final Report and Next Steps

II. Williamson Act Ad Hoc Committee: Final Report Recommended Revisions and Next Steps

Chair, Supervisor Miles Menetrey, Mariposa 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: Lake County; Yolo County

2026 Officers Swearing-In

Chair, Supervisor Miles Menetrey, Mariposa County, introduced Assembly Member David Tangipa to the RCRC Board of Directors. Congressman LaMalfa conducted the swearing-in of the 2026 Officers:

Chair

Supervisor Miles Menetrey, Mariposa County

First Vice Chair

Supervisor Bob Nelson, Santa Barbara County

Second Vice Chair
Immediate Past Chair

Supervisor Anne Cottrell, Napa County
Supervisor Geri Byrne, Modoc County

RCRC Outgoing Chair Remarks

Immediate Past Chair, Supervisor Geri Byrne, Modoc County, expressed gratitude to the RCRC Board of Directors for placing their confidence in her as Chair in 2025. Chair, Supervisor Miles Menetrey, Mariposa County, presented Supervisor Byrne with a gift as a token of appreciation on behalf of RCRC.

Supervisor Byrne called for a moment of silence in honor of Doug LaMalfa, Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, following his recent passing.

RCRC Incoming Chair Remarks

Chair, Supervisor Miles Menetrey, Mariposa County, welcomed supervisors to the January RCRC Board of Directors meeting. As Chair for 2026, Supervisor Menetrey looks forward to the year ahead, including hosting the County of the Chair, and building important relationships among elected officials.

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.

Member County Concerns and Issues

Chair, Supervisor Miles Menetrey, Mariposa County, provided an opportunity for the RCRC Board of Directors to discuss their individual member county concerns and issues. RCRC staff will review the concerns and issues raised by RCRC Board Members and assess each item for possible plans of action.

The RCRC Board of Directors heard from the following supervisors:

- Supervisor Jill Cox, Trinity County, requested guidance from fellow supervisors with experience in advancing controversial ordinances, seeking advice on approaches that minimize community division.
- Supervisor Lori Parlin, El Dorado County, inquired about agenda management software for counties.
- Supervisor Geri Byrne, Modoc County, requested information from counties with successful tribal compacts and asked fellow supervisors to reach out to share best practices.
- Supervisor Daurice Smith, Colusa County, raised concerns regarding proposed state budget changes impacting the mobile crisis benefit, Medi-Cal reimbursement shortfalls, delays in the Sites Reservoir water rights process, and ongoing challenges securing clean drinking water for disadvantaged communities. In response, Supervisor Kevin Goss, Plumas County, noted that making the mobile

crisis benefit optional might work better for small rural counties given their resources and population.

- Supervisor Shiela Allen, Yolo County, shared updates from her role on the National Association of Counties' Health Committee and requested information on how Medicaid eligibility changes are affecting rural clinics and hospitals, including closures or service reductions.
- Supervisor Amanda Folendorf, Calaveras County, highlighted courthouse security funding challenges, noting that state allocations are not keeping pace with inflation and that counties are required to backfill costs for a state-mandated function.
- Supervisor Shanti Landon, Placer County, provided an update on efforts to restrict foreign ownership of agricultural land, noting that Senator Steven Choi will sponsor legislation.
- Supervisor Jen Roeser, Inyo County, discussed challenges faced by public lands and frontier counties, including limited resources to address the golden mussel issue, and shared ongoing work related to the Payments in Lieu of Taxes formula reform.
- Supervisor David Griffith, Alpine County, expressed concern over rising childcare costs, noting significant impacts on families, workforce stability, and population growth in small rural counties.
- Supervisor Doug Verboon, Kings County, emphasized the need for a unified RCRC position on surface water issues to support consistent advocacy at the state and federal levels.
- Supervisor Bill Connelly, Butte County, discussed water-related challenges involving the Department of Water Resources, highlighted public safety concerns associated with Oroville Dam operations, and expressed interest in serving on a water-focused committee.
- Supervisor Rhonda Duggan, Mono County, provided an update on the Pack Fire, including challenges obtaining state cleanup assistance approval, and emphasized the broader implications for environmental protection and public resources.
- Supervisor Aaron Albaugh, Lassen County, raised concerns regarding wolf activity near residential areas, noting impacts to livestock and public safety and expressing frustration with current state determinations.
- Supervisor Ryan Kelley, Imperial County, highlighted risks to Colorado River water supplies, supported a statewide supply-focused water strategy, and raised concerns about the state's prioritization of behavioral health funding over public safety needs.
- Supervisor Mitch Mashburn, Solano County, offered to share information on successful tribal compacts and invasive species policies, and expressed concern over state actions that may undermine local land use authority. Supervisor Mashburn also noted ongoing economic development efforts in Solano County and the importance of protecting local control.

RCRC Resolution 26-02: Board of Directors Code of Conduct, Including Proposed Revisions

Patrick Blacklock presented on RCRC Resolution 26-02: Board of Directors Code of Conduct. Mr. Blacklock outlined the resolution, which incorporates changes based on the RCRC Executive Committee's guidance.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommended that the Board of Directors review and approve RCRC Resolution 26-02: Board of Directors Code of Conduct, which includes the revisions recommended by the RCRC Executive Committee.

Supervisor EJ Crandell, Lake County, motioned to approve RCRC Resolution 26-02: Board of Directors Code of Conduct. Supervisor Lee Adams, Sierra County, seconded the motion. Motion passed with all Supervisors present voting "Aye," except:

Not Voting: Imperial County; Monterey County

Guest Speaker – California Department of Food and Agriculture

Karen Ross, Secretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), addressed the RCRC Board of Directors with an overview of CDFA priorities, water supply challenges, fairs, and the current state of California's farm economy.

Following Ms. Ross' presentation, the RCRC Board of Directors discussed issues impacting rural counties, including wolf management, local meat processing, Farm to School programs, animal health and exhibition policies, Williamson Act modernization, alfalfa pricing, and pest management challenges. Secretary Ross highlighted ongoing coordination with legislative partners, shared available resources, and emphasized CDFA's commitment to continued collaboration with RCRC Member Counties.

California Public Utilities Commission Update

Leigh Kammerich, Senior Policy Advocate, John Kennedy, Senior Policy Advocate, and Tracy Rhine, Senior Policy Advocate, provided an update on the California Public Utilities Commission and covered energy and communications-related issues, with a focus on modernizing essential services and the ongoing role of Carriers of Last Resort (COLR). The discussion included the potential sunset of the BioMAT Program, the Investor-Owned Utilities Customer Reliability Report template, consumer choice categories, and the COLR withdrawal and retention process.

Environmental Services Joint Powers Authority Update

Staci Heaton, Senior Policy Advocate, provided an update on the activities of the Rural Counties' Environmental Services Joint Powers Authority (ESJPA), an RCRC-affiliated entity, highlighting current initiatives and opportunities for RCRC Member Counties to participate. Key updates included the adoption of the 2026–28 Business Plan, ongoing work on the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery's Rural Zero Waste Plan, and the Participating Entities Program.

State and Federal Legislative Update

Mary-Ann Warmerdam, Senior Vice President Governmental Affairs, along with members of the Governmental Affairs Department, provided an update on key issues at both the state levels, including the Governor's 2026–27 Proposed Budget, and ongoing discussions with counties regarding indigent care funding.

Staci Heaton and John Kennedy reviewed sponsored and pending legislation, including bills on California Environmental Quality Act exemptions for daycare centers, battery recycling, nitrous oxide sales, and school vaping regulations. Additional priorities include rural-focused initiatives, wolf delisting and livestock compensation, Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) reporting, and rural broadband funding.

*Supervisor Jeff Stephens, Sutter County, departed the meeting at approximately 1:15 p.m.

Water Issues Update

Eric Will, Policy Advocate, provided an update on recent developments regarding the State Water Project allocation compared to last year, potential federal involvement in the Potter Valley project, the conclusion of the Waters of the United States public comment period, and the development of language to ease annual reporting requirements for medium-priority basins under SGMA.

Recruitment and Retention Ad Hoc Committee Update

Mary-Ann Warmerdam provided an update on the Recruitment and Retention Ad Hoc Committee. In particular, the Ad Hoc Committee has developed a survey to capture recruitment, retention, benefits, and human resources strategies across RCRC Member Counties. The survey will be distributed in mid-February to RCRC Board Members, County Administrative Officers, and Human Resources Directors. The responses will inform policy principles, strategic planning, and advocacy efforts.

*Supervisor Ryan Kelley, Imperial County, departed the meeting at approximately 1:50 p.m.

Predatory Species Management Ad Hoc Committee Update and Recommended Amendments to RCRC Policy Principles

Staci Heaton provided an update on the work of the Predatory Species Management Ad Hoc Committee, including recommended amendments to the RCRC Policy Principles. Upcoming priorities include a meeting with Wade Crowfoot, Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency, to discuss the transition to new leadership at the Department of Fish and Wildlife, as well as a joint budget request for the state's wolf program in collaboration with the Farm Bureau and the Cattlemen's Association.

Following the RCRC Board of Directors' discussion of the amendments to the RCRC Policy Principles, the RCRC Board emphasized the importance of including language regarding a local liaison position. The Ad Hoc Committee will work to incorporate the request for future review, with the currently recommended amendments to be adopted

as-is. The final report will be presented with a recommendation at a future RCRC Board meeting after additional meetings.

Committee Recommendation

The Ad Hoc Committee requested that the RCRC Board of Directors adopt and approve the proposed amendments to the RCRC Wildlife Policy Principles.

Supervisor Aaron Albaugh, Lassen County, motioned to approve the Predatory Species Management Ad Hoc Committee's recommended amendments to RCRC Policy Principles. Supervisor Jen Roeser, Inyo County, seconded the motion. Motion passed with all Supervisors present voting "Aye," except:

Not Voting: Imperial County; Madera County; Monterey County; Sutter County

Establishment of Board of Directors Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

Chair, Supervisor Miles Menetrey, Mariposa County, and Eric Will presented on the creation of an ad hoc advisory committee on Sustainable Groundwater Management Act to explore the challenges around SGMA implementation and potential policy changes that would support county efforts to implement and conduct mandated requirements as part of SGMA. The Ad Hoc Committee will guide staff on advocacy efforts in the 2027-2028 legislative session and beyond.

Staff Recommendation

RCRC Chair, Supervisor Miles Menetrey of Mariposa County, and RCRC staff recommended that the RCRC Board of Directors approve the proposed Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

Supervisor Michael Kobseff, Siskiyou County, motioned to approve the above-mentioned recommendations, as amended. Supervisor Madeline Cline, Mendocino County, seconded the motion. Motion passed with all Supervisors present voting "Aye," except:

Not Voting: Imperial County; Madera County; Monterey County; Sutter County

Summary of RCRC Roundtable with Former Los Angeles Mayor/Assembly Speaker and Candidate for Governor Antonio Villaraigosa

Mary-Ann Warmerdam provided a summary of the RCRC roundtable held in January with former Los Angeles Mayor/Assembly Speaker and candidate for Governor Antonio Villaraigosa. RCRC Executive Committee members Supervisors Geri Byrne (Modoc County), Bob Nelson (Santa Barbara County), Shiela Allen (Yolo County), and Gary Bradford (Yuba County) discussed a range of topics with Mr. Villaraigosa, including rural

priorities. RCRC staff are coordinating with other gubernatorial candidates to schedule additional roundtables.

Adjournment

Chair, Supervisor Miles Menetrey, Mariposa County, adjourned the RCRC Board of Directors Meeting at 2:00 p.m.