

TO + FROM

Regional Council of Rural Counties Summary of the August 24, 2011 Board of Directors Meeting

On August 24, 2011, the Regional Council of Rural Counties (RCRC) convened a Board of Directors' Meeting at the RCRC Board Room in Sacramento, CA. To assist Board Members in reporting back to their counties, highlights from that meeting are provided below. Note: This is a summary of the key issues covered; a complete set of minutes of the meeting will be distributed at a later date.

Speaker

Chief Ken Pimlott, Director of CAL FIRE, discussed at length on how the State Budget has impacted CAL FIRE with regard to realignment implementation, SRA fees, and the inmate camp program. There was extensive discussion between the Director and Board Members regarding the new SRA fee that was adopted as part of the 2011 state budget.

Governmental Affairs

- Staff provided an update and breakdown on State Responsibility Area Fees (SRA) that was included in the adopted budget package under Assembly Bill 29x. AB 29x imposes a fee of up to \$150 upon each habitable structure within the SRA. Those revenues are to be kept in a special fund for distribution for fire prevention activities with the SRA. Staff will continue to work with the Board of Forestry and CAL FIRE to raise issues regarding the implementation of the fees in terms of its legal and technical implications, and ultimately, its impact on services.
- Staff provided an update of selected state and federal legislation, including:
 - Senate Bill 776 (DeSaulnier) which would eliminate the authority of local workforce investment boards to determine how to best serve their residents. The bill is currently in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. Amendments are expected to follow. Staff will continue to monitor this bill.
 - Assembly Bill 742 (Nestande) addresses controversial mining issues that will negatively impact a county's land use planning authority. Staff will continue to monitor the bill as it is held in the Assembly Rules Committee.
 - Assembly Bill 1417 (Assembly Governmental Organization Committee) which would ensure a statewide appropriation of \$18.2 million in Indian Gaming Special Distribution Fund (SDF) local mitigation monies this year. Currently, the bill is in the Senate Appropriations Committee.
 - 2012 Farm Bill The current 2008 Farm Bill does not expire until 2012, but discussions in both the Administration and Congress have already begun. The Farm Bill is an extensive piece of legislation which authorizes a broad range of programs, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), that are critical to rural counties. Staff will be sending out a survey to member counties for feedback in the next few days.

Water and Natural Resources Committee

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

- Staff provided an update regarding the proposed MOA between the USFS, BLM, RCRC and CSAC. Much progress has been made to create a statewide voluntary MOA outlining a structure under which counties and federal public land management agencies consent to communicate and work with one another. A draft MOA has been reached and has been reviewed by the County Counsels Association to ensure it in no way preempts or precludes any rights that counties currently have under state or federal law.
 - RCRC, CSAC, USFS, and BLM will schedule a larger stakeholder meeting before December at the RCRC offices to “roll out” the draft to all California county supervisors and to solicit additional comments and recommendations.
 - RCRC staff expects to present a final draft MOA for Board approval at the December 7, 2011 Board of Directors Meeting.

H.R. 2765 Federal Clean Water Act – 10% Rule

- Under the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) there is 10% Rule which specifies that no person who receives a “significant portion” of his or her income directly or indirectly from a permit holder may sit on a board or body that acts on permits issued under the federal CWA.
- H.R. 2765 would amend the CWA to remove the income threshold so it would no longer be considered a conflict of interest. The bill has been referred to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. RCRC staff is working with a coalition in support of H.R. 2765. Staff will send a follow-up email with additional information for member counties to contact their congressional representatives urging their support for this important bill.

H.R. 1309 Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011

- H.R. 1309 would extend the Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) for five years; however, Supervisor Stan Cleveland (Sutter County) has expressed concerns with H.R. 1309, in particular the provisions of the bill, which would phase out over five years previously grandfathered pre-FIRM flood insurance premium rates. Pre-FIRM properties will be subjected to phase-in of full actuarial rates and annual increases (not to exceed 20 percent per year) until the full actuarial rate is achieved. Staff encouraged counties with lands in floodplains to review and provide RCRC with comments with regard H.R. 1309.

State Water Resources Control Board Municipal and Industrial Storm Water Permits

- Staff provided a summary of the potential impact on county operations of recent actions by the State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board) in drafts of both the General Industrial Storm Water Permit and the Phase II Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) General Permit. The next draft of the Industrial Permit is expected to be released before September 1.

Administrative Matters

Acceptance of Yolo County as an RCRC Member County

- The RCRC Board of Directors approved Yolo County as a Member County. The addition of Yolo County brings the RCRC membership to 31 of the 58 California counties.