



Bill would send \$700K to Del Norte

By [Aaron West](#), [The Triplicate](#) February 27, 2015 06:37 pm

A California Senate bill has been introduced that would see millions in state-owed money given back to California counties, marking the first time such a payment has been made in over a decade if the legislation goes through.

Senate Bill 234, a bipartisan proposal introduced by senators Louis Wolk and Jim Nielsen, of Yolo County and Gerber, respectively, aims to appropriate \$19 million to the Department of Fish and Wildlife so it can make past due Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) payments to 36 rural Californian counties, according to a Rural County Representatives of California news release. While Gov. Jerry Brown's 2015–2016 proposed budget includes PILT funding for the upcoming year, annual payments haven't been made in well over a decade, the release states.

"Long story short, there are three counties in my district that haven't received payments since 2001: Del Norte, Humboldt and Lake," state Sen. Mike McGuire, one of the bill's 27 co-authors, told the Triplicate last week. About \$700,000 is due to Del Norte, he said.

California PILT was established in 1949 to offset adverse impacts to county property tax revenues that result when the state acquires private property for wildlife management areas.

For the \$700,000 due to Del Norte, County Administrative Officer Jay Sarina said that if it were received, it would go to basic services the county needs, as well as to departments that the county has had to cut back funding to since 2008, although ultimately the supervisors would decide where the discretionary funds go.

"The reductions have been across the board," Sarina said. "For example, the Planning Department — we used to have three or four planners, and also at least three building inspectors. All of those were scaled back to live within our means."

Sarina said that in his opinion the legislation, and the governor even budgeting for the PILT allocation, is a good sign, even though it's still got a lot of hearings and legislative grappling before Del Norte could get its share.

"It's a step in the right direction — in the past the money wasn't appropriated through the state budget, which means it wouldn't have been passed on," Sarina said. "The discussion was there but there was no mechanism for payments. Now that the state's seen increased revenue over the past year, it gives them more options. I'm more enthusiastic about it than I've been in the past. It's encouraging that it's in there."

Reach Aaron West at awest@triplicate.com.



Close Window