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RCRC Reignites Fight for PILT

SACRAMENTO, CA – February 02, 2017 – The Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) is once again sponsoring legislation to require the State to make good on their obligations to counties through the commitment of Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) payments. Senate Bill 58 by Senator Mike McGuire (D-Healdsburg) is a bipartisan effort to amend Fish and Game Code language back to its original form, making State PILT payments to counties a *requirement*.

Established in 1949 to offset adverse impacts to county property tax revenues that result when the State acquires private property for wildlife management areas, State PILT helps small and rural counties fund a variety of programs and services that benefit county residents. In 2015, the final State Budget Package included language in the Fish and Game Code that changed “shall” to “may” to make future State PILT payments to California’s 36 PILT counties permissive.

“State PILT is crucial to California’s counties, and over the last 15 years counties have struggled to tighten their budgets in order to fund programs and services for residents when the State stopped making payments,” said Bob Williams, RCRC Chair and Tehama County Supervisor. “This language change only makes it easier for the State to forego their obligation, further impacting programs and services to residents throughout the state.”

In 2016, RCRC sponsored Senate Bill 1188, also authored by Senator McGuire (D-Healdsburg), in conjunction with 15 co-authors. SB 1188 was also a bipartisan effort to restore the changed language. While the legislation received unanimous support throughout the entire legislative process, the Governor vetoed SB 1188, citing his commitment to follow through with payments during his tenure.

“We are grateful to Governor Brown for honoring the State’s commitments over the past couple of years, and recognize that he is the first Governor to do so in over a decade,” said Williams. “However, given the history of the payments, we have legitimate concerns

about how the next Administration may handle the State's obligations to counties, which SB 58 solves with an implementation date of January 1, 2019."

"The State needs to step up and follow through on a promise and advance Fish and Wildlife PILT payments to rural counties," Senator Mike McGuire said. "Since 2001, California has been depositing millions of PILT dollars that should have been going to rural counties into the State General Fund and it's time to give counties their due."

A detailed Q&A on California State PILT can be accessed [here](#). The full text of SB 58 can be accessed [here](#).

ABOUT RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES OF CALIFORNIA (RCRC)

The Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) is a thirty-five member county strong service organization that champions policies on behalf of California's rural counties. RCRC is dedicated to representing the collective unique interests of its membership, providing legislative and regulatory representation at the State and Federal levels, and providing responsible services for its members to enhance and protect the quality of life in rural California counties. To learn more about RCRC, visit rcrcnet.org and follow @RuralCounties on Twitter.

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