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RCRC Urges Governor to Sign PILT Legislation

Bipartisan Effort Overwhelmingly Approved by Legislature

SACRAMENTO, CA – August 24, 2016 – Legislation sponsored by the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) to restore the State's commitment to its county partnership involving state wildland areas is headed to the Governor for his signature. Commonly known as Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT), 36 California counties rely on State PILT to fund vital local programs and services. Senate Bill 1188 by Senator Mike McGuire (D-Healdsburg) has 15 other authors and co-authors, and is a bipartisan effort to restore Fish and Game Code language 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 Patricia Megason, RCRC Executive Vice President. "This language change makes it clear that the State values its county partners and recognizes the impact State PILT has on programs and services to residents throughout the state. We are grateful for the Senator's leadership on this issue, and we urge the Governor to sign this legislation."

The language change in the 2015 final State Budget Package is significant as the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) already owes nearly \$8 million in State PILT arrearages to California's State PILT counties. Despite the previous requirement in statute that the DFW make State PILT payments annually to the impacted counties, they have failed to do so until last year.

"This was an agreement made decades ago and the State has reneged on these payments for far too long," said Senator Mike McGuire. "Small communities and rural counties desperately need these dollars to keep our neighborhoods safe, fund local fire and emergency services, and invest in crumbling roads and streets."

A detailed Q&A on State PILT can be accessed [here](#). The full text of SB 1188 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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