



Berryhill Bulletin: October 2015

Tuesday, October 13, 2015



Legislative session wraps up for the year

In mid-September the legislature recessed until January. Any legislation that was going to move forward this year had to be passed by both houses and sent to the governor for his signature or vetoed by midnight on October 11. If a measure is not vetoed it automatically becomes law.

There were many issues—climate change, medical marijuana, and end of life choices—that dominated the news cycle, but I wanted to draw your attention to a topic that ultimately has a greater impact on middle class Californians. Taxes.

While state spending is at a record high (this year's budget spends \$265 billion, which includes an unanticipated \$10 billion windfall), the governor and legislative leadership did not prioritize spending for important programs such as roads, highways, services for the developmentally disabled, and access to health care for the lowest income and neediest Californians.

What they did do was spend billions of dollars on pet projects—like pay raises for public employees—and then insist more taxes were needed for the programs “shorted” in the budget.

Just this session the following taxes were proposed by the governor and Democrats in Sacramento:

- Taxing health plans—which would have meant higher health insurance rates for 24 million Californians
- A new \$2 per pack tax on tobacco
- A new tax on alcoholic beverages
- A six cent per gallon increase in the gas tax
- A 12 cent per gallon increase in the diesel tax
- A \$65 hike in vehicle registration “fees”
- A new \$75 “fee” on real estate transactions
- A new \$100 “fee” for owners of electric cars

All of these proposed taxes were defeated, but every year we fight this battle. No matter how much money is available, it is never enough for some of my colleagues. Taxpayers provide more than enough money to fund essential programs. This year, the state collected \$10 billion in unexpected revenues, and yet the governor and Democrats wanted to collect even more with new taxes. Having enough money is not the state's problem, prioritizing how existing dollars are spent and being transparent with the decision-making process is .

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Dying trees pose risk to our rural communities

Governor urged to declare a State of Emergency

My heart goes out to the communities impacted by the devastating fires in our area. Drought, invasive species, and the history of mismanaged federal, state, and other forestlands have placed California in a situation where high numbers of dead or dying trees are providing fuel that is escalating the intensity of wildfires throughout the state. This situation threatens our ability to conserve water, jeopardizes air quality, and carbon reduction as well.

Because of the threat presented by the increasing numbers of dead and dying trees in our rural communities, I have requested that Governor Jerry Brown and California Office of Emergency Services Director Mark Ghilarducci *declare a State of Emergency* .

While the Governor's office has recognized the drought as contributing to wildfire danger, the administration has only recently begun to acknowledge the effects of tree mortality.

Local resources are no longer enough to address the overwhelming increase in dead or dying trees throughout the state. Recently it was reported by the *Sacramento Bee* that the state has been sitting on more than \$40 million of the fire fee it collected from residents in rural areas for fire prevention activities. All available money should be being used to prevent and protect our communities, not hoarded in Sacramento.

State recognition of the disaster would draw much needed attention to the problem and begin the process of getting resources, both state and federal to the affected counties. For more information, please visit my website at: <http://berryhill.cssrc.us/content/berryhill-requests-governor-issue-state-emergency-declare-tree-mortality-disaster-california> .

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Out and about in the District

Squaw Valley Forum a success

The state of the forests was the main topic of conversation at a forum I co-hosted with Fresno County Supervisor Debbie Poochigian. Nearly 125 people filled the Squaw Valley Activity Center for the Rough Fire Forum on Monday, October 5, 2015.

We brought together experts from CalFire, the Office of Emergency Services, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Southern California Edison, PG&E, the National Park Service, and the Sierra and Sequoia National Forest. Fresno County Sheriff Margaret Mims was also on the panel and fielded many questions.

Questions came up about forest management, the Bark Beetle infestation, the drought, and how these issues contributed to the recent fires.

Thanks to all who came out to Squaw Valley. A special thanks to the staff at the Squaw Valley Activity Center for allowing us to use their wonderful facility.



Rancho Cordova's American River Brewing

Say cheers! Assemblymember Ken Cooley (D- Rancho Cordova) and I were on hand to officially congratulate American River Brewing on its Gold Medal win at the state fair. I enjoyed seeing the brewery's operation and hearing from business owner Dave Mathis about some of the challenges small business owners in California face. Congratulations on a great product.



Community events in the Foothills

Thanks to all who came out for the Mariposa/Bass Lake/Coarsegold community events in August. Assemblyman Frank Bigelow (R-O'Neals) and I appreciated the warm welcome and the good conversation. It was a busy day.



We started out the morning with a community coffee at the Miners Roadhouse in beautiful Mariposa, followed by an Oakhurst Chamber of Commerce luncheon in Bass Lake, and then a wonderful Coarsegold Chamber of Commerce reception on the lawn later in the afternoon .



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Veterans Day contest for Clovis area schoolchildren

The Clovis Veterans Memorial District annual Veterans Day contest for CUSD students is taking submissions. The theme for this year's contest is "Names on the Wall: A Salute to Gold Star Heroes."

Elementary school students are asked to submit artwork, while intermediate students are asked to submit essays, and high school students can submit video entries. For more information visit the Clovis Veterans Memorial District at cvmdistrict.org .

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Get a jump on College Financial Aid

Deadlines for college financial aid **have a way of creeping up on families once school starts**. Some financial aid is "first-come, first-served," so early submission can be a key factor in receiving financial aid from federal or state programs as well as from colleges, universities, or other private sources. Make sure you have your tax documents at the ready.

The first step in applying for **most** financial aid is completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which is available [online](#). The [FAFSA on the Web Worksheet](#) provides information about the kinds of aid available and how to fill out the online form.

There are many different types of scholarships and grants available to students. Below are links to different resources:

[Myths about Financial Aid](#)

[Middle Class Scholarship](#)

[Cal Grants](#)

[California Dream Act](#)

Special scholarship programs also are also available for [foster children](#) . Dependents of fallen or disabled police officers may be eligible for scholarships through the [California Law Enforcement Association](#) or the [John F. Duffy Scholarship/Grant Program](#) , sponsored by the California Peace Officers' Memorial Foundation. Children of fire fighters killed in the line of duty may be eligible for the [Daniel A. Terry Scholarship](#) .

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Mark your calendar for mobile office hours

Mammoth/Bishop area (held with Congressman Paul Cook's Office)

Mammoth

Friday, October 23, 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Mono County Library - Mammoth Lakes Branch
400 Sierra Parks Road, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

Bishop

Friday, October 23, 2:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.
Bishop Chamber of Commerce
690 N. Main Street, Bishop, CA 93514

Foothills (held with offices of Assemblymember Kristin Olsen and Congressman Jeff Denham)

Mariposa

Thursday, October 22, 9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
Mariposa Library
4978 10th Street, Mariposa, CA 95338

Oakhurst

Thursday, October 22, 1:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.
Sierra Senior Center
49111 Cider Lane, Oakhurst, CA 93644

Sonora (held with the office of Congressman Tom McClintock)

Tuesday, November 3, 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
Central Sierra Economic Development District
99 North Washington, Sonora

Valley (held with the offices of Assemblymember Kristin Olsen and Congressman Jeff Denham)

Denair

Thursday, October 29, 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
Denair

Hughson

Thursday, November 12, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
City of Hughson
7018 Pine Street, Hughson

Turlock

Wednesday, October 28, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Turlock Chamber of Commerce Conference Room
115 S. Golden State Blvd, Turlock

Waterford

Friday, November 6, 2:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.
City of Waterford City Hall
101 E. Street, Waterford .

Search

Contact the Senator

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Featured Resources



In Case You Missed It

- ▼ Our View: Central Valley delegation led way on California water bond

Modesto Bee - It's not often something happens deserving of the word "monumental," especially when discussing the legislative process. This might...

[Read More](#)

- ▶ Senate Republicans Offer New \$8.7 Billion Water Bond Proposal To Meet CA's Needs
- ▶ Gov. Brown's water bond falls far short of what's needed
- ▶ Statement from Senate Republican Leader Bob Huff on Status of Water Bond Discussions
- ▶ Jerry Brown presses case on \$6 billion water bond

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