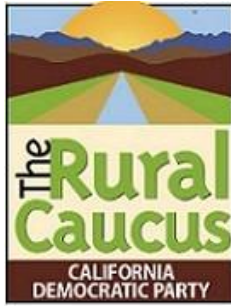


November 3, 2019



Advocating for a Solution

Dear Fellow Rural Caucus Members, I hope this finds you well and enjoying a relatively calm weekend. I think we all deserve a collective sigh of relief.

First, a reminder that **Tuesday is Election Day, and our very own Rural Caucus Regional Chair Elizabeth [Betancourt for AD 1](#) needs our help getting out the vote.**

As a Sonoman, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the Governor for his support, leadership and sense of urgency. I appreciate that he is bringing together the brightest minds and experts to scope how to reform/break up/replace **PG&E**.

But there needs to be a rural voice in the mix, so that any proposed re-structuring is vetted to ensure the consequences for our rural communities are thoroughly considered. For example, breaking PG&E into a bunch of municipal utilities, could put rural areas at a major disadvantage.

As stated in the first bullet point of the Rural Plank in the CDP Party Platform, our job is to "... consider the effect of any new policies or programs on rural California, by asking, 'Is it fair and will it work in rural California communities?'"

I am a major proponent of establishing public safety grade communications at our fairgrounds throughout the state, which are increasingly pressed into service as critical resources during emergency situations. It is imperative that all fairgrounds have permanent, high speed, open access internet. There is no market solution to provide it, so this needs to be a matter of public policy.

Besides broadband, we now know from the latest round of PG&E shutoffs, that the cell towers at the fairgrounds must have failsafe, emergency backup power. (Note: State Senator Mike McGuire has legislation pending requiring 48 hours for all cell towers.)

And, losing power in our rural communities also means losing water as we depend on domestic wells that operate with electric pumps.

Last week was head spinning. It has been almost impossible to think about anything except the fires, the black outs and the what ifs.

My family and I are very lucky. We are unscathed ... again (knock on wood). And couldn't be prouder of our state, our county, our magnificent firefighters, our chefs, who so generously show up at the fairgrounds to help feed first responders and evacuees, and the "citizen reporters" like my county supervisor Lynda Hopkins. I came to rely on her for the most up to date information, via social media.

A key takeaway is the critical role of the county fairgrounds as staging grounds, evacuation and recovery areas, and as facilities for large animals. The fairgrounds must be converted into safe havens where you know you can go for power, cell service, Internet, water, food - all essential services.

I urge we **press for a plan to network the fairgrounds as prioritized by CalOES. Please contact your mayors, county supervisors, the CEOs of your County Fairgrounds to write the CPUC. [Click here](#)** for a list of the relevant Commissioners, their respective Chiefs of Staff and Telecommunications Advisers.

So looking forward to seeing you in Long Beach, Friday November 15 at 7pm.

Until then, Joy

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