

August 23, 2018



August Update

Dear Rural Caucus Members, I wanted to give you a quick update on our various activities and concerns. I hope these monthly newsletters help keep us engaged as a group.

Legislative Watch:

- Of grave concern are the two new companion bills SB 844 and 845 introduced by Senator Bill Monning in a “never say die” effort to establish a vital, sustained funding source for safe, reliable, **clean drinking water** for all. SB 844 contains three agriculture fees: fertilizer, dairy and livestock, which, as a tax, requires a 2/3 vote. The second bill, SB 845, contains an opt out water fee and establishes the Safe Drinking Water Fund. This is now a voluntary fee, and no longer a tax. Both bills need to pass to go into effect. We need to push our electeds to put governance over politics. California families with toxic water cannot afford to wait any longer. Clean water is a right. For more, please read this [op-ed piece](#) in the New York Times.
- I am very happy to report that the **Net Neutrality** Bill SB 822 has moved forward, passing the Assembly Committee on Communications and Conveyance yesterday (Wednesday) by a vote of 8-2. It will now go to the Assembly floor. The list of telecommunications and business representatives denouncing the bill during yesterday’s hearing demonstrated that this fight is far from over. And, lest we forget the importance of net neutrality, read this [horrifying story](#) that Verizon “throttled”, i.e. slowed down emergency services data, down to dial up speeds, for the firefighters responding to the Mendocino Complex Fire.

Rural Caucus Work Group and Committee Update:

- I want to commend the **Water Discussion Group**, which has been meeting twice monthly via Zoom. If you cannot attend the meetings, the recordings are great, especially the ones with a speaker, like Grant Wilson from the Earth Law Center, who wants to turn water rights on their head, saying the laws were written not that long ago, and therefore can be changed, making #1 basic human needs and #2 the environment top priorities, everything else to flow from there. He rejects the concept that water is property and contends that the rivers themselves are stakeholders. Controversial and enlightening, you can see his August 14 presentation here: [Grant Wilson Presentation](#).
- **Phil Grosse** is making progress unraveling the best ways to help get clean drinking water to disadvantaged communities (DAC), initiating relationships with Don McEnhill, Executive Director of [Russian Riverkeeper](#), the leaders of the [Community Water Center](#), who are doing great work in the Central Valley. Phil is working on finding out who will be administering, for example, Prop 68’s dollars, before everything gets earmarked, so we can have a positive influence on how those funds are divvied up ... and then monitor that the funds actually get to where they are supposed to go.
- **Mike Smith** and I spoke with Jason Liles, senior policy consultant to State Sen. Mike McGuire, who offered to help us put together a meeting with McGuire, Bill Monning, author of the Clean Drinking Water Bills, Jim Wood and Bob Hertzberg, Chair of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water. The idea is to bring awareness of the Water Policy Discussion Group, who we are, as a joint effort with the Environmental Caucus, and our stated goal of “exercising influence on California water policy by means of the structures and activities of the California Democratic Party, the object being a fair and sustainable system.”

- I am especially proud of our Caucus Members who are running for Local Water Boards: **Mike Saunders** for Georgetown Divide Public Utility District, **Laura Peters, Ricki Heck and Bruce Herring** for Nevada Irrigation District, and **Lori Anzini** for El Dorado Irrigation District. Please support them in every way you can. It is so important we are at the table to ensure we have transparent and accountable local water districts, pursuing shared, sustainable, and affordable solutions, and making sure we are actively participating in the decision-making processes.

More on Broadband:

- I have been on a tear filing comments to the California Public Utilities Commission, the FCC and US Department of Agriculture, which is writing a pilot broadband project specifically for rural areas. You can see an example of what I am submitting [here](#). I am advocating that all our county fairgrounds get high speed Internet and same for our local water districts, so we will be able to monitor water use literally from the basin to the cloud in real time.
- **Carolyn Fowler** has been in touch with the Imperial County Office of Education, which is the lead agency, managing a successful state K-12 High Speed Network program, about coming to speak at our Caucus meeting in November in Long Beach., so we can learn how it works and how it can be implemented in our communities.

Cannabis Committee Update:

- **Helen Rouvier** is asking for your involvement in drafting a strong resolution on sensible cannabis regulation for consideration and action by the CDP. Her recent survey shows how little we all know about the issues related to legalization of cannabis, particularly in rural counties. How do we help our rural communities understand that this is a critical issue on many fronts - economic, medical, environmental, small farming, corporate control, dollars in politics and getting the right people elected to the Boards of Supervisors and City Council? Join the discussion on Facebook [here](#):

November is Coming:

- Tick tock, election day is just 75 days away and counting! Job One of the Rural Caucus is motivating voter turnout. I want to remind our County Chairs about CDP's program with [Voter Circle](#), a friend-to-friend online outreach platform to help with grassroots voter engagement and outreach ... at no charge for rural counties. If you have not done so already, DCC Chairs can file an application [here](#). For more information, the best contact is Party Resources Manager **Unique Wilson**.

I am very proud of the work we are doing on so many important fronts. Please know how much I appreciate you and all that you do.

With all my very best, Joy

Joy Sterling | Rural Caucus Chair | 707 484 0013 | joy@ironhorsevineyards.com
www.cdpruralcaucus.org

STAY CONNECTED