

Weekly ReCAP for September 11, 2020

Next CPC meeting September 14, 2020 now starting at 3:00 p.m. to 5 p.m. Until the COVID-19 is resolved in our community, the CPC meetings will be held remotely by ZOOM and/or conference calling. To participate please watch for connection information from Jenny. New members are welcome, and members only will be able to participate in any closed session.

BOS – September 15, 2020 – Agenda not available yet.

PC meeting – September 24, 2020 - Agenda not available yet.

RCRC – The Barbed Wire – September 4, 2020

education, finance, juvenile justice, criminal justice administrative fees, and cannabis.

Unfortunately, the revised State Budget Package does not include an expenditure plan for the Assembly Bill 32 Cap-and-Trade Auction proceeds. The State Budget Package also does not address the wildfire prevention allocation package proposal that was subject of much consideration in the final week of the 2020 Legislative Session.

In late June, the Legislature approved a large aspect of the 2020-21 State Budget Package. Those actions by the Legislature and the Governor enacted sixteen budget trailer bills that assist in implementing the 2020-21 State Budget Package, as well as revise the main Budget Bill which was passed on June 15th.

The Governor has until September 30th to act on the bills which comprise the revised State Budget Package. It is expected the Governor will sign these additional budget trailer bills with minimal-to-no changes.

Read RCRC's revised *Rural Rundown* [here](#), which reflects a number of updates to the State Budget Package. The updates are highlighted in yellow.

2020 End of Session Wrap Up...Coming Soon

The California Legislature is on recess as the tumultuous 2020 Legislative Session has come to a close. Tempers flared and the clock ran out as lawmakers worked late into the night on Monday to pass

legislation before the midnight hour. After such an unusual legislative spring and summer, the next few months are a welcomed break from the hustle and bustle. Be on the lookout for an end of session wrap up in an upcoming episode of the [Hometown California](#) podcast when RCRC sits down with Jean Hurst of HBE and Barbara Glaser of the California Hospital Association for an insider's look at what became of the 2020 Legislative Session after the coronavirus pandemic through "normal" out the window.

Bill of the Week: Assembly Bill 890 (Wood) – Nurse Practitioner Independent Practice

RCRC is requesting that Governor Newsom sign into law Assembly Bill 890, authored by Assembly Member Jim Wood (D-Healdsburg). AB 890 allows Nurse Practitioners (NPs) that meet specified requirements to practice independently and without physician and surgeon supervision.

Specifically, AB 890 authorizes a certified NP to practice without physician supervision in limited practice settings, and beginning January 1, 2023, allows an NP that has completed a three-year transition to practice, to also provide health care services outside of the limited practice settings.

Due to California's significant shortage of health service providers in underserved and rural areas, many children and adults face significant challenges accessing quality services. AB 890 will help bridge the access gap by allowing NPs to provide full healthcare services in areas where physician care is unfeasible.

RCRC's request for signature letter can be accessed [here](#). AB 890 was supported by RCRC throughout the legislative process and currently awaits consideration by Governor Newsom. Please contact Tracy Rhine, RCRC Legislative Advocate, at (916) 447-4806 or trhine@rcrcnet.org for more information.

RCRC's California Ballot Measure Conversation Continues in Hometown California Episode 6

In the latest episode of the Hometown California podcast, our host, Paul A. Smith, continues the conversation with [Jeremy B. White](#) of [Politico](#) about the twelve ballot measures California voters will decide this November. Together, Paul and Jeremy provide a nonpartisan look at each ballot measure. They discuss the support and opposition arguments and financing behind the propositions, and provide insight about the impact of each measure on rural counties. ([Download now](#))

This is the second of two episodes in a series about California's November 2020 ballot initiatives, recorded on August 20, 2020. This episode covers

- Proposition 19: The Home Protection For Seniors, Severely Disabled, Families, and Victims of Wildfire Disasters Act
- Proposition 20: Reducing Crime and Keeping California Safe Act
- Proposition 21: Rental Affordability Act
- Proposition 22: Protect App-Based Drivers and Services Act
- Proposition 23: Protect the Lives of Dialysis Patients Act
- Proposition 24: The California Privacy Rights and Enforcement Act

- Proposition 25: Senate Bill 10 – Bail Reform Referendum

If you missed the discussion about the first five ballot measures, be sure to listen to Hometown California Episode 5.

And be on the lookout for this episode of Hometown California coming soon in Spanish.

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More from Politico about the California November 2020 Ballot Initiatives: [Available Here](#)

RCRC Vice Chair Stacy Corless Highlights the Need for Permanent PILT and SRS Funding

As Americans are under public health restrictions during the coronavirus pandemic, many are turning to the nation's public lands for recreation. But the public-land counties that contain National Forests and National Parks are facing heightened financial burdens amid the coronavirus economic crisis. In an [opinion piece](#) published earlier this week, Mono County Supervisor and RCRC Vice Chair, Stacy Corless, highlighted the need for permanent funding of the [Payments in Lieu of Taxes](#) (PILT) and [Secure Rural Schools](#) (SRS) programs, established by Congress to provide funding for public-land counties. In California, more than 75% of U.S. Forest Service land lies within RCRC member counties.

Supervisor Corless serves as Chair of the National Association of Counties (NACo) Public Lands Management Subcommittee.

Surface Transportation Extension (the Highway Bill)

With the *Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act*, commonly referred to as the *Highway Bill*, expiring in less than a month, lawmakers in both chambers of Congress are beginning to acknowledge the inevitability of a surface transportation extension, likely lasting one year. A yearlong extension would give the next Congress time to get organized, which will be especially key if either chamber or the White House changes party control. The extension could pass by unanimous consent as a standalone bill or be attached to a continuing resolution to keep the government funded, which has the same September 30th deadline. Additionally, the extension and or continuing resolution could end up attached to a fifth coronavirus relief package, which is currently hindered in partisan gridlock. To read more about what the FAST Act provides for California's rural counties, see [here](#).

Coronavirus Relief Package Negotiations

On Tuesday, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-San Francisco) said she spoke to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin over the phone, but the pair failed to bridge a chasm between their proposals for more coronavirus relief. Speaker Pelosi said in a [statement](#) after the 36-minute conversation that, "Sadly, this

phone call made clear that Democrats and the White House continue to have serious differences understanding the gravity of the situation that America's working families are facing." Speaker Pelosi indicated the sides stand far apart on the price tag for a fifth package designed to alleviate economic and health-care crises fueled by the pandemic. House Democrats first proposed more than \$3 trillion in spending, but later said they would accept a \$2.2 trillion bill. The Trump Administration has not gone higher than roughly \$1.3 trillion. Meanwhile, Senate Republicans are drafting a "skinny" relief package that is expected to cost less than the measure they proposed in July. It is expected to include a weekly \$300 boost in federal unemployment benefits until the end of December, liability protections, another round of payments for the Paycheck Protection Program, and \$105 billion for education. The lower price tag on the "skinny" bill could win over some Republican members of the U.S. Senate who were wary of the GOP's \$1 trillion July plan. Senate Republican Conference Chairman John Barrasso (R-Wyoming) said they are considering a vote on the legislation next week after the Senate returns from its August recess. Democrats have already rejected taking a "piecemeal" approach to coronavirus relief, and it's highly unlikely they will support the new proposal.

Legalizing Marijuana - House Vote

In a legislative update for September, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Maryland) [announced](#) that the Marijuana Opportunity, Reinvestment and Expungement (MORE) Act will be voted on during the week of September 21st. The MORE Act would remove cannabis from the Controlled Substances Act and erase some cannabis criminal records. The legislation was introduced in the House of Representatives by House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler (D-New York) last year and was referred to several other committees after clearing the Judiciary Committee. It is not clear whether those committees will waive jurisdiction or mark-up the bill in order for it to get vote on the House Floor. If the House approves the bill, there will still be an open question about whether the Republican-controlled U.S. Senate would follow suit. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Kentucky) [is a strong advocate for hemp](#), but he has maintained steadfast opposition to broader marijuana reform. That said, he did [hold closed-door meetings with industry representatives](#) last year.

6 deaths at Avalon being checked to see if COVID related

By Nick Baptista / The Valley Springs News / September 9, 2020

Calaveras Public Health is in the process of confirming the exact causes of death of six people who were residents of the Avalon Health Care San Andreas facility, Dr. Dean Kelaita told the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday.

The skilled care facility has been the site of a novel coronavirus outbreak the past month. As of Tuesday morning, 52 residents and 21 staff members at the facility had tested positive for COVID-19, Dr. Kelaita said.

"This represents the most significant challenge to our community posed by the pandemic to date,' Dr. Kelaita told the board.

Avalon Health Care San Andreas is now isolating all COVID-19 confirmed residents in a separate part of the skilled care nursing facility apart from the other residents and tended to by staff members not caring for non-COVID residents,. Dr. Kelaita informed the board. In addition, he said, the California Department of Public Health has sent a “Rapid Response Team” to visit Avalon Health Care San Andreas to offer guidance and technical assistance.

Mark Twain Medical Center CEO and President Doug Archer also addressed the board.

He said the hospital as of Tuesday had adequate capacity. The hospital normally has a daily average of eight patients, but had 17 at the moment, of which only two were COVID-19 related.

There were six patients in the Intensive Care Unit and nobody was on a ventilator.

If necessary, the hospital can surge to accommodate 42 beds, Archer told the board, adding Mark Twain has a good supply of the COVID19 treatment medications of Remdesivir and convalescent plasma.

In all, Calaveras County as of Friday had a total of 273 confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus since the outbreak began late last year in China. The 16 new cases confirmed on Friday included one woman between 18 to 49 years of age, four women and two men between 50 and 64, and three women and six men over 65 years of age.

The deaths of the Avalon residents as of Dr. Kelaita’s Tuesday briefing had not been added to the county’s COVID-19 fatality count that stood at two.

Calaveras Public Health undertakes a thorough and formal review of any death to ensure accurate and official information is reported to the public. Any deaths suspected of being from COVID-19 are not shared with the public until Calaveras Public Health has received an official cause of death from a physician, coroner, or other official.

This helps prevent any errors inn reporting. Once a death is confirmed it will be added to the county’s biweekly COVID-19 numbers shared with the public.

Supervisors approve \$2.6M seed funding commitment for fire districts to take over ambulance services

By Davis Harper / Calaveras Enterprise / Sep 10, 2020

In final budget hearings Tuesday and Wednesday, the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors approved a \$2.6 million commitment to issue a loan to fire districts to take over ambulance services in the county.

Earlier in the meeting, the county received their second presentation in recent weeks from the fire chiefs joint powers authority (JPA) regarding their intent to bid on the county's ambulance contract for its north and south corridors.

The districts are estimating they'd be able to generate about \$1.5 million in reserve funds by the second year, since they would be eligible for higher Medicare and Medi-Cal reimbursement rates than the existing private nonprofit provider, American Legion Ambulance. The additional funding could be reinvested to add new ambulances and paramedics, which could reduce response times and ultimately save lives, Altaville-New Melones Fire Protection District Chief and JPA spokesperson John Rohrabough told supervisors.

The fire districts are asking the county for a commitment of about \$2.6 million in seed funding to get the program up and running, should they win the bid, which they would have to submit by late October. They estimate this could be repaid within two years.

Calaveras Consolidated Fire Protection District Chief Rich Dickinson told supervisors, "if you can find the money, we will pay you back in a timely manner. We believe we have good forward thinking. We have a roadmap for success."

Rohrabough and other fire chiefs in the meeting said they'd continue moving forward with their bid and pursue alternative funding if supervisors opted to not commit funds.

Supervisors said they were in favor of the concept of the fire districts reducing call response times by taking over ambulance services, but disagreed on where the funds should come from and whether it would be worth the risk.

After several hours of deliberating, supervisors voted 3-2 to direct staff to issue a loan of \$2.6 million dollars to the JPA, contingent on a bond agreement and committal sign-off from the nine districts' boards of directors.

Funding for the loan will come from the following budgets: \$500,000 from the Valley Springs benefit basin, \$500,000 from the Copperopolis benefit basin, \$1 million from the Butte Fire settlement from Pacific Gas & Electric and \$600,000 in road impact mitigation study (RIMS) funds, which normally pay for transportation improvements.

The budget transfer only required three votes from the board because it was done in final budget hearings, Deputy County Administrative Officer (CAO) Christa Von Latta told the Enterprise.

District 4 Supervisor Dennis Mills made the motion, and District 1 Supervisor Gary Tofanelli made the second.

Tofanelli, who sits on the Mountain Valley Emergency Medical Services board for Calaveras County, said the fire districts' proposal "behooves us to do us anything we possibly can to help them get this thing going."

"I'm uncomfortable going into this with the exception that I believe in our fire districts," said Chairwoman Merita Callaway, who also voted in favor.

Dissenting votes came from District 5 Supervisor Ben Stopper and District 2 Supervisor Jack Garamendi, who both argued the funding should come from the General Fund.

Butte settlement funds were being saved to cover the expenses of a potential audit of Butte Fire clean-up, Garamendi said.

“We are turning ourselves into a pretzel to make this thing happen,” Garamendi said. “There’s got to be a better way for our fire districts to do this. We’re putting at risk county employees’ jobs. We don’t know what’s going to happen in a few months ... and we’re taking (\$2.6 million) off the table. And I haven’t seen a formal opinion on whether this is even legal. I think it may be, but these are big risks.”

CAO Al Alt said it would take significant staff time to vet the loan, and will require input from the county auditor and treasurer.

“We’re more than happy to do it, especially when it comes to fire chiefs, but I want ... to be clear that this isn’t a week’s worth of work,” Alt said. “This is all hands on deck. Other priorities are going to suffer in the short term, and we need to be aware of that in the context of COVID and a potential power safety shutoff.”

The rest of the budget hearing

The board also made allocations for federal COVID-19 relief funding.

The county expects to receive a total \$4.59 million from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act between now and December. Coming into the meeting, the board had already allocated \$200,000 to learning hubs for children of essential employees of the county, school district and healthcare industry.

The county has received \$1.53 million from that pot to date.

Meeting policy minimums for the General Fund Reserve and contingencies was of priority to supervisors.

“We need to be able to carry from this budget significant reserves,” said Mills, with reference to pending reimbursements to disaster recovery budgets. “We’re not going to know what comes down the road.”

Supervisors opted to reduce the General Fund Reserve to \$4.1 million – the policy minimum of 8% of the General Fund – to replenish the empty Teeter Fund, tapped into to balance the budget, back up to \$1.3 million.

The rest of the CARES funding was allocated to contingencies for the board to make determinations for at a later date. Callaway told the Enterprise in recent weeks that the board will likely allocate much of the rest of the CARES funding to cover a laundry list of public safety payroll expenses incurred due to COVID-19.

The board passed a preliminary budget in June that included 5.3% cuts across departments due to a number of projected revenue shortfalls due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic fallout. Staff were also directed to chill open positions, meaning they would have to go through the administrative office to determine how critical a particular hire may be.

Talk of a “structural deficit” surfaced again during budget discussions.

Year over year, the county’s closing General Fund balance has declined, according to Von Latta.

The balance for the new fiscal year was \$2.24 million – down \$6.5 million from the previous year. The 2019-20 budget for that year was down \$3.3 million from the 2018-19 fiscal year.

“We are trending in a negative direction,” Von Latta said.

The Environmental Management Agency requested funding to help replace a boom truck for weights and measures. The truck is 33 years old, and its crane will be out of compliance with the California Air Resource Board by the end of the year if it’s not replaced, Interim Agricultural Commissioner Mike Boitano told supervisors. He said the crane was red-tagged in its last safety inspection.

The board asked county staff to come back with a funding recommendation on a 3-2 vote, with Callaway and Garamendi dissenting.

“I think this truck is vital for what we’re mandated to do,” said Tofanelli.

As part of the cuts, the sheriff’s office lost about \$165,000 in monies previously approved for shift differential.

In the hearing, the board granted the sheriff’s office one additional corporal position.

Sheriff Rick DiBasilio thanked supervisors for “allowing the sheriff’s office to move forward.”

The final budget will be brought back to supervisors for approval Sept. 22.
