



RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES  
OF CALIFORNIA

March 5, 2018

The Honorable Bill Dodd  
Member, California State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 5064  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 919 – SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Dodd:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I offer our support for your Senate Bill 919. This measure requires the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to develop a plan to deploy a network of stream gages that includes a determination of new needs as well as opportunities for reactivating existing gages. Funding for this measure would be developed by the SWRCB and included in its plan for implementation.

RCRC is an association of thirty-five rural California counties, and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from those member counties. Our member counties are also home to many of the state's most significant rivers, creeks and streams which are all part of the network of water resources in the state. Stream gages are an important tool to provide information that can be essential in understanding this dynamic system, particularly in predicting floods, managing floodplains, and ensuring dam and reservoir safety.

Historically, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) has been the largest sponsor of stream gages in California and, typically, USGS has worked closely with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and local agencies to install, monitor and manage the system as well as compile data from the network of gages. However, over the years, this system of gages has suffered from underinvestment, and even neglect. In addition, the data that is developed is more often than not hard to find. This disorganized state of affairs has resulted in many of the gages not being actively utilized; in fact, according to some estimates, only 54 percent have been active in recent years. Further aggravating the situation is that many of the gages in operation fail to report key variables, such as flow, temperature and drainage.

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1215 K Street, Suite 1650, Sacramento, CA 95814 | [www.rcrcnet.org](http://www.rcrcnet.org) | 916.447.4806 | Fax: 916.448.3154

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As a result, compiling useful information from the operational gages is a tedious process that could greatly benefit from a more universal approach, including the establishment of a universal database to store and easily retrieve data. SB 919 sets out to outline a strategy to rectify this deficiency in the state's water management system.

As introduced, the measure identifies the SWRCB as the implementing agency. As noted above, it is DWR that has been a key partner in the past and already has programs to collect data and disseminate information. We would encourage you to take advantage of their expertise and consider tasking DWR (vs. the SWRCB) with the development and execution of this needed program "refresh." We look forward to working with you in the development and passage of SB 919.

If you should have any questions or concerns regarding RCRC's support of SB 919, please do not hesitate to contact me at [mwarmerdam@rcrcnet.org](mailto:mwarmerdam@rcrcnet.org) or (916) 447-4806.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Mary-Ann Warmerdam". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

MARY-ANN WARMERDAM  
Senior Legislative Advocate

cc: Members of the Senate Natural Resources & Water Committee