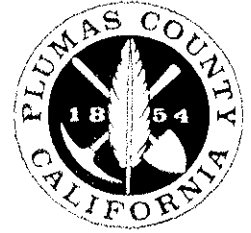


# BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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June 7, 2011

Governor Jerry Brown  
State Capitol  
Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: May Revise and Watermaster Service Fees

Dear Governor Brown:

We are writing to request a one-year reprieve in the elimination of General Fund support for the watermaster services provided by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to administer judicially decreed water rights.

County governments have expressed their willingness to work with you to address structural budget problems and find new ways to deliver necessary public services in the most cost-effective manner. In the case of watermaster services, the Water Code allows them to be provided by either DWR or an appropriate local public agency.

In Plumas County there are two watermaster service areas. For fiscal year 2011-12, we have been given a budget from DWR that shows a total program cost of \$290,300, which provides for less than one full-time-equivalent position performing services in our county. In reviewing local staffing options, there is an opportunity to provide the same services at significantly lower cost.

We are prepared for the further realignment of services provided by the State and by local governments, and watermaster services appear to be an area where cost savings can be achieved. However, with the proposed elimination of General Fund support coming in the May Revise, there has been no transition planning, local funding mechanisms do not yet exist, and we have been given only four weeks notice before the bills are sent out by DWR.

The procedures to replace the DWR watermaster with a local agency require some time for local organizing and then formal notice to affected water rights holders and a petition to the superior court having jurisdiction over the water rights decrees. There is also the requirement to comply with Prop. 218 to transition from fees collected by the State to fees that may be legally collected by a local agency. For those reasons, we request that you restore the \$1.23 million in General Fund support for the watermaster program for 2011-12.

**Governor Jerry Brown**  
**June 7, 2011**  
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Without a reasonable transition plan, watermaster fees will increase by 543% and 261% in the two service areas in Plumas County. The magnitude of these increases is a violent shock to our water users, particularly under current economic conditions, and is one more burden on our efforts to maintain sustainable agriculture as an important part of our economy and rural landscape.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lori Simpson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name and title.

Lori Simpson  
Chair, Board of Supervisors