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April 16, 2019

The Honorable Cecilia M. Aguiar-Curry  
Chair, Assembly Local Government Committee  
State Capitol, Room 5144  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 849 (Bonta): Elections: local redistricting**  
**As amended 4/11/19 – OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED**  
**Set for hearing 4/24/19 – Assembly Local Government Committee**

Dear Assembly Member Aguiar-Curry:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), and the Urban Counties of California (UCC), we write to express our “Oppose Unless Amended” position for Assembly Bill 849 (Bonta) which imposes significant new requirements on local agencies tasked with adopting district boundaries.

Counties are concerned with a number of new requirements for adopting supervisorial district boundaries that are contained in AB 849. These include:

- 1) additional public hearings with specific location, time, and accessibility requirements
- 2) obligations to maintain a new, separate website with specific components
- 3) requiring specific outreach efforts to underrepresented groups

Each of these new mandates requires a considerable investment of financial and human resources by counties. While AB 849 clearly constitutes a reimbursable mandate, we are concerned that – as past experience has indicated – the state will avoid paying mandated costs by suspending the mandate, which leaves the statute intact, but makes its implementation optional by way of not providing funding. This puts counties in a quandary; the public has an expectation that the new program or higher level of service will be provided, but if a county does so, it does so at its own cost. The result of this quandary – particularly in election law – is that counties accept the cost, an outcome that is patently unfair. To that end, we request amendments to provide appropriate funding to allow counties to meet the obligations set forth in the bill.

We are also concerned about the language in Section 35 of AB 849 that requires the county counsel to petition the court for an order imposing maps when the board of supervisors does not adopt district boundaries by the deadline imposed in the bill. This creates an awkward and potentially-troubling conflict between the board and its appointed county counsel, whose primary responsibility is to advise

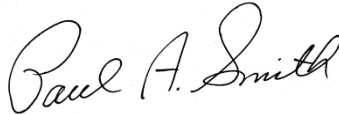
the board on legal matters. This section of the bill requires additional work to ensure that there is a reasonable process to resolve this conflict.

While we appreciate and acknowledge the importance of transparent redistricting process, the requirements outlined in AB 849 are burdensome, duplicative, and, most importantly, expensive. Counties' history with elections mandates indicates that once a reimbursement obligation is approved, it is unlikely to be funded and we anticipate the case will be no different for AB 849. For these reasons, CSAC, RCRC, and UCC respectfully request amendments to AB 849 that will address our concerns. Please feel free to contact us if we can provide additional assistance.

Sincerely,



Geoff Neill  
Legislative Representative  
CSAC



Paul A. Smith  
Vice President, Government Affairs  
RCRC



Jean Kinney Hurst  
Legislative Representative  
UCC

cc: Members and Consultants, Assembly Local Government Committee  
The Honorable Rob Bonta, Member of the California State Assembly