



September 16, 2015

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The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 243 (Wood) – Medical Marijuana
REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE**

Dear Governor Brown:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties® (CSAC), I write to respectfully request your signature on AB 243, by Assembly Member Jim Wood. This measure is one of the three-bills passed by the Legislature that addresses the regulation of medical marijuana.

The environmental damage caused by marijuana cultivation activities is most evident in California's northernmost counties where production is concentrated. As the business has become more lucrative, increasing numbers of producers have illegally diverted water and poisoned fish and wildlife through the misapplication of pesticides and other chemicals. Such actions are of significant concern to counties statewide.

AB 243 would address these issues through a number of means including provisions that would require the Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR), the State Department of Public Health (DPH), the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to promulgate regulations or standards relating to medical marijuana and its cultivation. Detailed licensing provisions for cultivation are also included. The bill would also direct CDFA, DFW and SWRCB to take various actions to address the environmental damage caused by marijuana cultivation including illegal waste discharges and water diversions. Critical funding would also be made available to local agencies for environmental enforcement actions and regulatory activities.

While CSAC supports AB 243 and appreciates various components of the bill that respect local authority, a provision found in Section 11362.777(c)(4) would run contrary to the interests of counties. It specifies that if a local government does not have a cultivation ordinance in place by March 1, 2016, the Department of Food and Agriculture will be the default licensing entity for all such jurisdictions. Because it would also contradict the dual licensing structure established by Assembly Bill 266 (Bonta), Assembly Member Wood has been made aware of this provision and has agreed to author clean-up legislation addressing the problem next January.

With the commitment to address this issue, CSAC supports AB 243 and respectfully requests your signature on this bill. CSAC truly appreciates the work of the Administration, the authors and their staff on this collaborative effort to enact a critical statewide regulatory framework that also respects the interests of local government.

It is for these reasons that we support AB 243 and respectfully request your signature of this important measure. Should you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to contact Karen Keene at 327-7500, ext. 511 or kkeene@counties.org. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Matt Cate
Executive Director

cc: The Honorable Jim Wood, Member of the Assembly
The Honorable Rob Bonta, Member of the Assembly
The Honorable Ken Cooley, Member of the Assembly
The Honorable Reginald Byron Jones-Sawyer, Member of the Assembly
The Honorable Tom Lackey, Member of the Assembly
The Honorable Mike McGuire, Member of the Senate
Ms. Graciela Castillo-Krings, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Governor's Office