

**Bylaws of the California State Legislature  
Rural Caucus  
for the 2007-2008 Session**

**1. Organization and Qualification for Membership**

a. There shall be a Rural Caucus of the California State Legislature. Membership in the Rural Caucus shall be limited to the three following categories: (1) Full voting members, who shall have been elected either to Senate or Assembly districts which meet the criteria established below, and who have complied with all the provisions of Sections I and II of these Rules; (2) Ex officio members, who may attend all Caucus proceedings but who shall not have a vote; and (3) Members representing each of the four legislative leaders (Speaker of the Assembly, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, Senate Minority Leader and Assembly Minority Leader, respectively), who shall have full voting authority in all Caucus proceedings. For purposes of these Rules and all vote thresholds provided for in these Rules, each of the four legislative leaders shall at all be determined to be “full voting members” of the Rural Caucus.

b. Full voting membership in the Rural Caucus of the California State Legislature shall be extended to all persons who have been elected to either a Senate or Assembly district which possess a population density of less than 1,000 persons per square mile, as provided for by the U.S. Census Bureau. However, “full voting membership” shall only be granted to those eligible persons who shall provide written and signed confirmation of their intent to serve as a member of the Rural Caucus.

c. Each of the four legislative leaders (Speaker of the Assembly, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, Senate Minority Leader, and Assembly Minority Leader, respectively) shall have the privilege to appoint a replacement member to represent them at all meetings of the Rural Caucus, and that person shall both possess full voting authority when serving in the capacity as a proxy or replacement for one of the respective legislative leaders, and shall be counted for purposes of establishing any vote threshold pursuant to these Rules. No person, however, may both serve as a member of the Rural Caucus and as a proxy or replacement for one of the respective legislative leaders and simultaneously cast two votes on any action or proceeding of the Caucus.

## **II. Election of Officers; Duties; Quorum; Vote Threshold**

- a. At the first meeting of the Rural Caucus in each year, the Caucus shall elect its officers and adopt the Rules for its proceedings through a ballot election. The election shall be decided by eligible voting members of the Rural Caucus that return ballots at the beginning of each legislative session. There shall be three offices within the Rural Caucus: Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. Each office shall have a term of one legislative session and each office shall be elected by two-thirds vote of the full voting membership of the Caucus. Nominations for offices shall take place at the first Rural Caucus meeting of each legislative session. Members of the Rural Caucus shall have 30 days to return their ballots to the Chair for tabulation. At no time shall the offices of Chair and Vice-Chair be held by members possessing the same party designation.
- b. The Chair shall serve as the presiding officer during all proceedings of the Rural Caucus. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall serve as the presiding officer. The Secretary shall record all actions of the Caucus, and retain records of its proceedings.
- c. A quorum shall comprise a majority of all full voting members of the Rural Caucus. No formal action may be taken by the Rural Caucus until a quorum has been constituted, except that upon the agreement of the Chair and Vice-Chair, the Caucus may convene for the purpose of reviewing materials and information, while making recommendations to a duly constituted quorum of the Caucus based upon said action.
- d. No formal action may be taken by the Rural Caucus except upon the affirmative majority vote of two-thirds of full voting members of the Caucus. This includes – but is not limited to – the formal endorsement of the Caucus either in support or opposition to legislation before either House of the Legislature.

## **III. Joint Rules and Assembly Rules to Control in Absence of Caucus Rules**

- a. Where no provision of the Rules of the Rural Caucus of the California State Legislature is controlling, the appropriate authority for conduct of the Caucus shall be – in order of importance – the Joint Rules of the California State Legislature, the Rules of the Assembly, and Mason’s Manual of Legislative Procedure, respectively. Notwithstanding this provision of either the Joint Rules of the California State Legislature, the Rules of the Assembly and Mason’s Manual of Legislative Procedure, however the Rules of the Rural Caucus of the California State Legislature shall expressly provide for both a two-thirds vote to approve any formal action, as well as ensuring that the Chair and Vice-Chair shall not share the same party designation.

b. The Caucus, as provided for in Section II(d) of the Rules, may establish a formal position in support or opposition of legislation, or any other issue of interest to the Caucus. Any member may ask that the Caucus establish a formal position in support or opposition of legislation or any other issue of interest to the Caucus. However, a majority vote of those full voting members present and voting at a Caucus meeting shall be necessary to place such a measure on the agenda of the Caucus for vote, and an affirmative majority vote of two-thirds of full voting members of the Caucus shall be required to enact any such position.

c. In the case of any measure of the California State Legislature, prior to any vote, each full voting member of the Caucus shall be provided an analysis prepared by the respective Committee staff to which the measure has been referred. Said analyses shall also be made available at the Caucus meeting at which the vote is to be considered.

#### **IV. Calling of Meetings of the Rural Caucus**

a. The Rural Caucus of the California State Legislature shall be convened in only one of two ways: (1) Upon the notice of the Chair, and in a manner consistent with Joint Rule 51 for the hearing of any measure in a policy committee, except that no File Notice shall be necessary for a meeting of the Caucus, and; (2) Upon the presentation to the Chair of a letter signed by no less than fifty percent of the full voting members of the Caucus. Upon the presentation of such a letter, the Chair shall convene a meeting of the Rural Caucus at a time and in a manner consistent with Joint Rule 51 for the hearing of any measure in a policy committee, except that no File Notice shall be necessary for a meeting of the Caucus.

b. In addition to all other duties prescribed by the Chair, the Secretary shall be responsible for providing both written and telephone communication to all full voting members of the Caucus of the time and place of all Caucus meetings. The Secretary shall also – to the extent possible consistent with the Floor Schedule in both the Assembly and Senate – see to it that an announcement is made on the respective Floors announcing that a meeting of the Rural Caucus of the California State Legislature shall be taking place.

#### **V. Amendments to Caucus Rules**

a. Consistent with Section II(d) of these Rules, and consistent with the affirmative vote of two-thirds of full voting members of the Rural Caucus of the California State Legislature necessary to enact these Rules and duly establish and constitute the Caucus, any and all amendments to these Rules shall be approved only upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds of full voting members of the Rural Caucus.

b. Any proposed amendments to the Rules which govern this Caucus shall be forwarded in the same manner as an effort to seek a formal Caucus position on pending legislation. Only a full voting member of the Caucus may propose an amendment of these Rules. The manner by which Members of the Caucus are informed of any proposed changes to the Rules shall be the same as that provided for any effort to obtain a formal Caucus position on pending legislation, except that no Committee Analysis shall be needed in order to take up an action to amend the Rules of the Caucus.