RECOMMENDED ACTION AND JUSTIFICATION:
Authorize the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors to sign a letter supporting AB 1960 (Leslie) which seeks to restore funding in the State Budget that was authorized in legislation through passage of AB 473 (Oller) in 1998. AB 473 provided annual appropriations from the State General Fund to the three counties in the State that do not have incorporated cities – Alpine, Mariposa, and Trinity. The three counties provide similar services that cities do, yet do not receive their fair share of the Vehicle License fees and Gas and Diesel taxes for these same services. Because language in AB 473 stated that it was the “intent” of the legislature to provide these funds, the Governor has omitted this funding from the last two State budgets. The total funding provided by AB 473 was approximately $147,000 with $80,000 going to Mariposa.

AB 1960 is an attempt to restore this vital funding to the three affected counties. In previous years this money has been included in General Purpose Revenue and has been considered discretionary funding. Possible uses include but are not limited to road maintenance, additional library hours, and safety equipment for the Fire Department.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:
The Board routinely authorizes the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors to sign letters supporting issues that will benefit the citizens of Mariposa County.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:
Make modifications to the letter and authorize the Chairman to sign the letter with modifications.

Do not authorize the Chairman to sign the letter. Individual Board members may write letters on their own behalf supporting the legislation.
February 28, 2006

Honorable Dave Cogdill
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 4117
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: SUPPORT AB 1960 (Leslie)

Dear Assembly Member Cogdill:

The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors encourages you to support AB 1960 (Leslie) which seeks to restore funding in the State Budget that was authorized in legislation through the passage of AB 473 (Oller) in 1998. The intent of AB 473 was to provide an annual appropriation to Alpine, Mariposa, and Trinity counties as a means to equalize funding for counties with no incorporated cities. AB 473 demonstrates that similar services are being delivered by these three counties that are very comparable to cities. However, due to the lack of an incorporated city these three counties are unfairly treated through the existing distribution of the Gas and Diesel Tax, and Vehicle License Fee funds. AB 473 recognized the inequity that exists for counties with no incorporated cities and annually provided a total of $147,000 that was proportioned by population to Alpine, Mariposa, and Trinity counties.

While the funding has been cut now for two budget years the need for these equalizing dollars has not gone away. In fact the need is even greater today due to the lack of other traditional discretionary funding that is used to maintain roads, providing additional hours of operation for the Library, offsetting the cost of turnouts for the Volunteer Fire Fighters, and replacement of water tenders which are critical in rural areas that do not have water systems. These are only a few of the many examples of services that are in jeopardy each year.

Again, Mariposa County respectfully requests your support of AB 1960 which restores equitable funding to three counties with no incorporated cities. Attached is a copy of the complete history AB 473 along with analysis and votes.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and please contact Supervisor, Bob Pickard at 209-966-3222 if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

LEE STETSON
Chairman
LS/BP/mbh
Attachment

cc:  State Senator, Chuck Poochigian
     Assembly Member, Tim Leslie
     Alpine County Board of Supervisors
     Trinity County Board of Supervisors
     Wes Lujan, Advocacy
     Rural Council of Rural Counties
     California State Association of Counties

BCC: Margie Williams, Mariposa County Clerk of the Board.