



July 28, 2022

The Honorable Anthony J. Portantino, Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
California State Capitol, Room 2206  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 1972 (Ward): Grand juries  
As Amended on May 19, 2022 – Oppose Unless Amended  
Set for Hearing – August 1, 2022 – Senate Appropriations Committee**

Dear Senator Portantino:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the Urban Counties of California (UCC), and the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), must respectfully oppose Assembly Bill 1972, by Assembly Member Chris Ward, unless it is amended to fully address the considerable costs it would impose on county governments.

The county coalition's opposition to AB 1972 relates exclusively to the changes in Section 890 of the Penal Code, which would increase the per diem rate paid to civil and criminal grand juries from the current statutorily required \$15 per day to an amount "equal to seventy percent of the county median daily income." While we appreciate and understand the desire to encourage increased diversity on grand juries, we are opposed to AB 1972 because it lacks a mechanism to cover what we estimate will result – at the low end – in \$15.5 million of new and unanticipated county general fund costs. Costs could be considerably higher given that (1) our estimate reflects a conservative projection of the number of meetings per county; (2) it assumes the bill language does not expand the number of days the stipend applies to (e.g., subcommittee meetings); and (3) it assumes that the number of grand jury meetings will remain static. Further, our estimate is based on information reported by counties on civil grand juries only, although the bill would also apply to criminal grand juries.

While the state's revenues have exceeded expectations and historical precedent year after year, in most counties per capita revenues have never recovered from the ravages of the Great Recession, in real dollars. We therefore request that the provision in Section 2 of the bill providing for increased compensation apply only in years the state budget has provided a sufficient appropriation for the purpose. Doing so would appropriately align the cost with the level of government making the decision.

For the reasons stated above, CSAC, UCC, and RCRC regretfully oppose AB 1972 unless it is amended to provide funding for the increased costs imposed on counties. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions about our position.

The Honorable Anthony J. Portantino

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Respectfully,



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