



## NEWS RELEASE

### Second District Supervisor Janice Rutherford

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## Board Approves Chamber-County Partnership Program

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**SAN BERNARDINO** — The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday approved funding to revive a program that helped local chambers of commerce promote tourism in unincorporated communities for more than three decades.

“Tourism is a growing part of San Bernardino County’s economy, and this partnership with our local chambers can help us attract even more visitors to experience our beautiful mountain and desert communities,” said San Bernardino County Second District Supervisor Janice Rutherford, who sought to restart the effort.

The Board’s action Tuesday allocated \$350,000 to the County Economic Development Agency to fund a pilot program to support chambers of commerce in unincorporated communities by sharing a portion of transient occupancy taxes collected in the communities they represent. People who stay at hotels or private rentals for less than 30 days are required to pay a transient occupancy tax.

“Our main industries up here are tourism and real estate, so this goes right to the heart of our economy,” said Lake Arrowhead communities Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Robin Bull. “It’s critical to reinvest to make it grow, and this is going to allow us to do even more than we are already doing now to promote tourism.”

The County of San Bernardino Board of Supervisors implemented the County’s first transient occupancy tax in 1964 specifically to fund recreation. It began sharing the tax proceeds with local chambers of commerce in 1980 to help them promote tourism; however, the program was phased out after 2012 when an audit determined some chambers were using the funds for day-to-day operations rather than tourism marketing.

The County plans to avoid the issues associated with the previous version of the program by establishing a list of qualifying expenses so chambers know how the funds can and can’t be used.