

# Bill to rescue libraries goes to Wilson's desk

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SANTA CRUZ — A bill to rescue the county's library system is headed to the governor's desk, after 41-28 approval by the state Assembly on Tuesday.

Assembly Bill 1905 would allow the county Board of Supervisors to give libraries \$930,000 a year in property taxes that usually go to water and sanitation districts and the Port District.

Most of the credit for the bill's passage goes to Senate majority leader Henry Mello, who has taken the libraries under his wing.

Joining the Watsonville Democrat in supporting the bill Tuesday was Santa Cruz Republican Bruce McPherson.

He was only Republican in the Assembly to vote for the bill. McPherson not only broke party ranks, he went against the Republican caucus's dislike of the bill.

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— Bruce McPherson,  
Assemblyman

comes in bothers the caucus in general," McPherson said in a phone conversation from Sacramento. "And that's understandable. It's not something I like to vote for, either."

McPherson outlined his objec-

tions to the bill, and why he voted for it anyway.

"It's not a picture-perfect way to do it. The county has to make some priorities and even put libraries at a higher echelon," he said. "And I don't like to have other districts responsible for library services throughout the county. But the overriding issue is, we cannot let our library services fall apart in Santa Cruz County."

Once the bill hits the governor's desk, he has 30 days to sign it into law or veto it.

Whether Republican Gov. Pete Wilson will go against his party's recommendation or stand with the freshman GOP member remains to be seen.

"I'd put it at 50-50 right now," McPherson said. "He too is very concerned about the tax implications but I'm going to be telling him how important it is and how much importance people in Santa Cruz County place on their library system."

Mello said Tuesday he also plans to lobby the governor in favor of the bill.

AB 1905 is the second library bill the Legislature has sent to the governor's desk.