

Background Sheet

AB 2449 (Rubio, B)

Enhancing Public Access Through Teleconferencing

BACKGROUND

As part of his response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Newsom issued a series of Executive Orders to expand public access to meetings of local agencies by suspending some of the restrictions on teleconferencing. The effect was the expanded use of teleconferencing for meetings of a legislative body, resulting in enhanced meeting access and increased participation by the public.

PROBLEM

Recently enacted AB 361 allows for the teleconference provisions detailed in the Executive Orders to continue during a period of emergency declaration. However, once an emergency declaration has ended, local agencies will again be required to comply with antiquated provisions of existing law, making it potentially more difficult to hold meetings of the legislative body by teleconference. While current law does allow for “teleconference locations” under normal circumstances, it requires various actions be taken at the teleconference locations and fails to recognize in the modern digital age that a teleconference location is wherever there is a person with a computer, a tablet, or even a mobile phone.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

AB 2449 will eliminate the previously existing concept of teleconference locations and will revise notice requirements to allow for greater public participation in teleconference meetings of local agencies. The bill does not require teleconferencing, rather, it modernizes existing law to ensure greater public participation in meetings of the legislative bodies of local agencies who choose to utilize teleconferencing.

AB 2449 would require that a quorum of the governing body be physically present at a clearly identified meeting location for all public meetings. The bill also expresses legislative intent to improve and enhance public access to local agency meetings, consistent with the digital age, by allowing broader access through the teleconferencing options relevant to AB 361, on a consistent, ongoing basis outside of a declared emergency.

SPONSOR

- Three Valleys Municipal Water District

SUPPORT

- Three Valleys Municipal Water District
- Public Water Agency Group
- San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership
- Southern California Water Coalition

OPPOSITION

- None on File

CONTACT

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