

# **Background Sheet**

## **AB 703 (Rubio, B)**

### **Enhancing Public Access Through Teleconferencing**

#### **BACKGROUND**

As part of his response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-29-20 in March 2020 to expand public access to meetings of local agencies by suspending some of the restrictions on teleconferencing. Allowing local agencies to utilize teleconferencing for meetings of the legislative body has enhanced public access and increased participation by the public.

#### **PROBLEM**

With the expiration of Executive Order N-29-20, local agencies will again be required to comply with antiquated provisions of existing law which make it much more difficult to hold meetings of the legislative body by teleconference. Current law refers to “teleconference locations” and requires various actions to be taken at “teleconference locations” by local governments wishing to teleconference meetings. Current law does not recognize that a teleconference location is now wherever there is a person with a computer, a tablet, or a mobile phone!

#### **Proposed Solution**

AB 703 will eliminate the previously existing concept of “teleconference locations”; will revise existing law to ensure minimum standards for public participation; and will revise notice requirements to allow for greater public participation in teleconference meetings of local agencies. The bill does not require teleconferencing, but modernizes existing law to ensure greater public participation in meetings of the legislative bodies of local agencies which choose to utilize teleconferencing.

AB 703 also expresses legislative intent to improve and enhance public access to local agency meetings,

consistent with the digital age, by allowing broader access through teleconferencing options consistent with the Governors Executive Order N-29-20, permitting expanded use of teleconferencing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **SPONSOR**

- Three Valleys Municipal Water District

#### **SUPPORT**

- Three Valleys Municipal Water District

#### **OPPOSITION**

- None on File

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