



**COUNTY OF LAKE**  
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January 9, 2024

The Honorable Juan Carrillo  
Chair, Assembly Committee on Local Government  
1020 N Street, Room 157  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 817 (Pacheco) Open meetings: teleconferencing: subsidiary body.  
SUPPORT – As Amended March 16, 2023**

Dear Assembly Member Carrillo,

Lake County writes in support of Assembly Bill (AB) 817 (Pacheco), as amended March 16, 2023, which would remove barriers to entry for appointed and elected office by allowing non-decision-making legislative bodies that do not have the ability to take final action to participate in two-way virtual teleconferencing without posting their location.

Local governments across the state have faced an ongoing challenge to recruit and retain members of the public on advisory bodies, boards, and commissions. Challenges associated with recruitment have been attributed to participation time commitments; time and location of meetings; physical limitations, conflicts with childcare, and work obligations.

As you will be aware, Clear Lake, the largest natural lake fully within California's borders, is located near the geographic center of Lake County. Clear Lake has over 100 shoreline miles, meaning travel from one portion of the County to another can be quite time consuming (*not to mention costly*). Meeting participation considerably expanded during the COVID-19 pandemic when virtual tools (e.g. *Zoom*) were implemented. Geographic barriers were removed, in the interest of inviting the best possible contributions and broadest possible complement of contributors. The values that undergirded the necessity of remote participation during the pandemic did not lose relevance as related emergency declarations lifted; public meetings should be broadly accessible, and transportation and physical mobility, for example, should not be a barriers to participation.

Diversification in civic participation at all levels requires careful consideration of different protected characteristics as well as socioeconomic status. The in-person requirement to participate in local governance bodies presents a disproportionate challenge for those with physical or economic limitations, including seniors, persons with disability, single parents and/or caretakers, economically marginalized groups, and those who live in rural areas and face prohibitive driving distances.

Participation in local advisory bodies and appointed boards and commissions often serves as a pipeline to local elected office and opportunities for state and federal leadership positions; those pathways should be open to all.

AB 817, as amended March 16, 2023, would help address these issues by providing a narrow exemption under the Ralph M. Brown Act for non-decision-making legislative bodies that do not take final action on any legislation, regulations, contracts, licenses, permits, or other entitlements, so that equity in opportunity to serve locally and representative diversity in leadership can be achieved.

For these reasons, we are pleased to support AB 817 and reiterate our appreciation for your leadership on this most important issue.

Sincerely,

, Chair  
Lake County Board of Supervisors

CC: The Honorable Juan Carrillo, 39th District  
Members and Consultants, Assembly Committee on Local Government  
William Weber, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus  
Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, California State Assembly District 4  
Senator Mike McGuire, California State Senate District 2