



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

Board of Supervisors

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January 2, 2023

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,

Mendocino County writes in support of Assembly Bill (AB) 817 (Pacheco), 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 limitation, conflicts with childcare, and work obligations.

Diversification in civic participation at all levels requires careful consideration of different protected characteristics as well as socio-economic 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.

AB 817 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.

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For these reasons, Mendocino County is in strong support of AB 817 and respectfully requests your AYE vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Glenn McGourty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Glenn" and last name "McGourty" clearly distinguishable.

Glenn McGourty, Chair
Mendocino 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