



February 3, 2021

The Honorable Alex Lee
Member of the California State Assembly
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB339 – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Lee:

I write today on behalf of the Los Angeles Sunshine Coalition, an unincorporated association that, since 2014, has worked to expand transparency in local government through education, advocacy, litigation, and activism. Our members regularly attend public meetings at which we give comment, record and publish videos of the proceedings, and audit local agency compliance with the Brown Act.

In March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Los Angeles closed City Hall to the public and initiated a policy, still in place as I write to hold all public meetings remotely. We in the Coalition were worried that this would have the effect of inhibiting public participation, but our minds were collectively blown when we saw that precisely the opposite had happened.

Remote access to meetings has widened public participation beyond anything we could have imagined before the Spring of 2020. Unprecedented numbers of Angelenos now have the ability to attend meetings in any part of this huge city without travel time, to attend multiple meetings in a day, and to participate in multiple meetings simultaneously, all of which were impossible without remote participation.

And the people of this City have taken advantage of these new abilities to work extensive changes in municipal politics. It's not an exaggeration to say that remote access to meetings in Los Angeles has changed everything. It's also not an exaggeration to say that our City Councilmembers do not like it, not a bit.

They are hearing from more people about more issues than ever before, and they don't all like what they're hearing. No one in this organization would be surprised at all if they cancelled remote participation as soon as Gavin Newsom says it's OK. This bill would prevent them from doing so, and thus we support the bill.

We also support the bill's expansion of access to translation services. Our members attend meetings of legislative bodies of all sizes, including business improvement districts and charter schools. Many of these smaller bodies provide no translation services at all,¹ requiring commenters to provide their own simultaneous translators. This is clearly an unreasonable burden on commenters, and this bill would fix it for most people.

For these reasons, the Los Angeles Sunshine Coalition is pleased to support AB339. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can further assist your office in passing this important bill. We can be reached via email at policy@sunshinecoalition.net

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrian Riskin', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Adrian Riskin
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Los Angeles Sunshine Coalition
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¹ They're also very inconsistent about the double time rule, but that's a matter for another letter.