

ALEX LEE

ASSEMBLYMEMBER, TWENTY-FIFTH DISTRICT

ASSEMBLY BILL 339

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



SUMMARY

This bill would allow for continued remote participation in local and state hearings/meetings and expand language access, allowing for more people to participate in government meetings and decisions.

BACKGROUND

Laws governing public participation for the state legislature, local agencies, and state boards and commissions all require certain processes for members of the public to participate at open meetings. However, participation is often limited to those who are able to travel to meetings to speak in-person, and to those who speak and read English. These requirements, along with inconsistent language access standards, often preclude immigrants and low-income people from participating.

While COVID-19 precautions have increased usage of remote participation options, not all agencies allow for effective remote participation. Additionally, there is frequently confusion over how to access meetings through remote technology options. The lack of timely notification and clear instructions reinforces obstacles.

THE PROBLEM

COVID-19 has exacerbated existing barriers that prevent people from participating in one of our democracy's greatest features - public discourse designed to inform the rules and policies that govern us. In addition, linguistic, physical, and geographic isolation prevents constituents from exercising their civic duties, which limits our governing bodies from achieving their full potential.

SOLUTION

AB 339 would protect the public's access to government, both during and following the COVID-19 pandemic.

This bill would ensure that:

- Local agencies, state agencies, and the State Legislature provide both call-in and internet service-based options for all public meetings so constituents can participate either remotely or in-person.
- Language access services are provided for immigrant communities.
- Meeting agendas and instructions for accessing meetings remotely are posted in a timely and accessible manner.

SUPPORT

Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability (Sponsor)
Californians for Pesticide Reform
Central California Asthma Collaborative
Central California Environmental Justice Network
Central Valley Air Quality Coalition
Clean Water Action
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Cultiva La Salud
Dolores Huerta Foundation
Faith in the Valley
Fairmead Community & Friends
Fresno Barrios Unidos
Jakara Movement
Mi Familia Vota
Pesticide Action Network
PolicyLink
Pueblo Unido CDC
Root & Rebound
Time for Change Foundation

CONTACT

Allison Lim, Chief of Staff
Office of Assemblymember Alex Lee
916-319-2025 | Allison.lim@asm.ca.gov