

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SUPERVISORS

Phillip Peters District 1
Chris Parlier..... District 2
Jeff Flores..... District 3
David Couch District 4
Leticia Perez..... District 5



KATHLEEN KRAUSE
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue, 5th Floor
Bakersfield, California 93301
Telephone (661) 868-3585
TTY Relay 800-735-2929

March 27, 2025

The Honorable Maria Elena Durazo
Chair, Senate Local Government Committee
State Capitol, Room 407
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 707 (Durazo), Open meeting mandates – OPPOSE

Dear Senator Durazo,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our concerns with your bill, SB 707, which would impose unfunded mandates on local governments and significantly increase administrative and financial burdens without providing state reimbursement. While we support public access and transparency in government, SB 707 imposes impractical and costly requirements that would strain county resources and create logistical challenges in conducting public meetings.

Key Concerns:

1. **Unfunded Mandate** – The bill requires counties to implement expanded teleconferencing, translation services, and increased public outreach without state reimbursement, shifting the financial burden to local governments already struggling with limited budgets.
2. **Operational and Logistical Challenges** – Mandating two-way teleconferencing, live webcasting, and in-person meeting locations will be particularly difficult for counties with large rural areas, limited broadband access, and insufficient IT infrastructure. This creates an inequitable standard that disproportionately affects less-resourced jurisdictions. Likewise, the bill language is unclear whether jurisdictions will have to provide alternative teleconferencing sites for the public to attend and participate in meetings.
3. **Language Accessibility Requirements** – While ensuring language access is important, requiring multilingual agendas based on a 20% threshold fails to consider local capabilities and could lead to significant costs, delays, and compliance difficulties, particularly in counties with highly diverse linguistic populations. The bill is unclear if these requirements would also apply to other Brown Act committees within a local government and whether translated versions of an online agenda would meet the new requirements.

4. Loss of Local Control – The bill removes flexibility for counties to determine the most effective means of conducting public meetings, overriding existing best practices tailored to local needs. This one-size-fits-all approach does not account for the unique demographics, geography, and fiscal constraints of individual counties.

For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors respectfully opposes SB 707 and urges you to consider amendments to this measure that provide state funding, implementation flexibility, and reasonable exemptions for counties facing technological or financial barriers. We appreciate your attention to this matter and welcome further discussion on practical solutions that enhance public engagement without overburdening local governments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Leticia Perez', with a stylized, cursive script.

Leticia Perez, Chair
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Local Government Committee
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange