



February 26th, 2021

Honorable Blanca Rubio
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assemblymember Rubio:

Subject: Support for AB703 (Rubio) Open Meetings, Local Agencies, Teleconferences

Thank you for introducing AB703 which the San Gabriel Valley Water Association supports. AB703 will ensure continued public access to local agency meetings conducted by teleconference. The bill assures that the conduct of official meetings is consistent with the intent of Section 54953 of the Government Code, relating to local government, public access and transparency. The San Gabriel Water Association's 60 members provide drinking water to 2 million residents in 31 cities through special districts, municipal utilities, investor-owned utilities, and not for profit mutual water companies. We believe that public participation is a valuable part of policy development in the water supply arena.

Governor Newsom's Executive Order, N-29-20, modified the Ralph M. Brown Act's requirements for teleconferencing official meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic, provided that certain notice requirements are met. The Executive Order secured the ability of the public to observe and comment at public meetings conducted via teleconferencing and also included procedures for receiving and swiftly resolving public requests for reasonable accommodation for those with disabilities.

AB703 would allow for teleconferencing of official meetings by public agencies subject to existing provisions regarding the posting of notice of an agenda for meetings conducted by teleconference, and the continued ability by the public to observe the meeting and provide public comment. This will ensure that public participation through teleconferencing after the COVID crisis is over, will remain a meaningful and transparent part of the conduct of government business.

Please count on the San Gabriel Valley Water Association's support for AB703.

Sincerely yours,

Greg Galindo
President