



January 29, 2021

The Honorable Bob Wieckowski  
California State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 4085  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB274 – SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Wieckowski:

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. To do this, of course, we need to know in advance when and where meetings are scheduled to take place.

The Brown Act, which SB274 would amend, currently requires local agencies to post physical copies of their agendas in public in advance of meetings and in electronic form on their web sites if they have them.<sup>1</sup> These posted agendas inform the public of what topics will be covered at a given meeting, but they don't allow people to learn that a meeting will take place unless one happens to check the posting location or the web site.

In order to address this problem the Brown Act also requires local agencies to mail copies of agendas and associated documents to members of the public on request.<sup>2</sup> Such requests are valid for an entire calendar year and serve as a way for interested people to be informed of and about upcoming meetings without having to remember to check multiple posting locations or web sites on a regular basis.

In most cases agencies will send electronic copies of agendas and documents by email on request. Many agencies have automated systems to accomplish this. However, there are agencies that insist on using postal mail to deliver agendas and

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<sup>1</sup> At §54954.2(a)(1).

<sup>2</sup> At §54954.1.

documents. In some cases they require requesters to pay postage and per-page copy charges, often in advance of sending materials. Occasionally they insist on mailing materials by methods which require the recipient's signature.

These measures, of course, delay notification, often until the actual date of the meeting is past. This effect is especially harmful with respect to special meetings, for which only 24 hours notice is required. When agencies require signatures to receive agendas it becomes even more difficult to receive them in a timely manner. People with full time jobs are rarely home when mail is delivered and are often unable to pick up materials at the post office immediately.

SB274 would solve this problem by requiring agencies to email copies of agendas and associated documents on request. This change will allow interested members of the public to attend and monitor meetings much more efficiently and effectively than is now possible, will prevent people missing meetings because mailed agenda materials arrived late, and will eliminate per-agenda charges for postage and copying.

This bill would vastly increase public access to local agency meetings and therefore The Los Angeles Sunshine Coalition supports it as written. We would, however, like to offer one suggestion to improve the bill. As written it would require agencies to email electronic copies of the agenda packet documents along with agendas. Often these agenda packets contain a significant amount of data, which is sometimes too large to attach to an email. Agencies that presently email meeting materials solve this problem by emailing download links for the packets rather than attaching them. We recommend that, in the interest of clarity, the law specify that emailing download links for the agenda and agenda packet would meet its requirements.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can further assist your office in passing this important bill. I can be reached via email at [policy@sunshinecoalition.net](mailto: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  
Policy and advocacy coordinator  
Los Angeles Sunshine Coalition  
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