

Memo

Carmichael



RECREATION AND
PARK DISTRICT

To: CRPD Advisory Board of Directors
From: Mike Blondino, District Administrator
Date: April 20, 2023
Subject: Carmichael Recreation and Park District support for AB 817

Background/Discussion:

The California Association of Recreation and Park Districts (CARPD) is sponsoring AB 817 and asking for our support. This measure would remove barriers to entry for appointed and elected office by allowing nondecision-making legislative bodies that do not have the ability to take final action to participate in two-way virtual teleconferencing without posting location.

As we all know, local governments across the state have faced an ongoing challenge to recruit and retain members of the public on advisory bodies, boards, and commissions. Challenges associated with recruitment have been attributed to participation time commitments; time and location of meetings; physical limitation, conflicts with childcare, and work obligations. AB 817 would help address these issues by providing a narrow exemption under the Ralph M. Brown Act for non-decision-making legislative bodies that do not take final action on any legislation, regulations, contracts, licenses, permits, or other entitlements, so that equity in opportunity to serve locally and representative diversity in leadership can be achieved.

Financial Analysis:

N/A

Recommendation:

The Advisory Board of Directors approve the Advisory Board Chair and District Administrator signing the letter of support for AB 817.



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April 20, 2023

The Honorable Blanca Pacheco
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 6240
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 817 (PACHECO) LOCAL GOVERNMENT: OPEN MEETINGS – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly member Pacheco:

On behalf Carmichael Recreation and Park District, we write to express our strong support for AB 817, which would remove barriers to entry for appointed and elected office by allowing non-decision-making legislative bodies that do not have the ability to take final action to participate in two-way virtual teleconferencing without posting location.

It has increasingly been a challenge to recruit and retain members of the public to serve on Advisory Boards like ours. Challenges associated with recruitment have been attributed to participation time commitments; time and location of meetings; physical limitation, conflicts with childcare, and work obligations. The COVID-19 global pandemic drove both hyper-awareness and concerns about the spread of infectious diseases, as well as removed barriers to local civic participation by allowing this same remote participation. This enabled individuals who could not otherwise accommodate the time, distance, or mandatory physical participation requirements to engage locally, providing access to leadership opportunities and providing communities with greater diversified input on critical community proposals.

Existing law (Stats. 1991, Ch. 669) requires local bodies to publish and publicly notice opportunities that exist to participate in and serve on local regulatory and advisory boards, commissions, and committees under the Local Appointments List, known as Maddy's Act. However, merely informing the public of the opportunity to engage is not enough: addressing barriers to entry to achieve diverse representation in leadership furthers the Legislature's declared goals of equal access and equal opportunity.

Diversification in civic participation at all levels requires careful consideration of different protected characteristics as well as socio-economic status. The in-person requirement to participate in local governance bodies presents a disproportionate challenge for those with physical or economic limitations, including seniors, persons with disability, single parents and/or caretakers, economically marginalized groups, and those who live in rural areas and face

prohibitive driving distances. Participation in local advisory bodies and appointed boards and commissions often serves as a pipeline to local elected office and opportunities for state and federal leadership positions.

AB 817 would help address these issues by providing a narrow exemption under the Ralph M. Brown Act for non-decision-making legislative bodies that do not take final action on any legislation, regulations, contracts, licenses, permits, or other entitlements, so that equity in opportunity to serve locally and representative diversity in leadership can be achieved.

For these reasons, we are pleased to support AB 817 and thank you for your leadership on this most important issue.

Sincerely,

Joyce Carroll
Advisory Board Chair

Mike Blondino
District Administrator

cc: State Assemblymember Kevin McCarthy
State Assemblymember Josh Hoover
State Senator Roger Niello
Members and staff, Assembly Local Government Committee