

Memo

Carmichael



RECREATION AND
PARK DISTRICT

To: CRPD Advisory Board of Directors
From: Mike Blondino, District Administrator
Date: March 21, 2024
Subject: Carmichael Recreation and Park District support for AB 817

Background/Discussion:

The California Association of Recreation and Park Districts (CARPD) is still sponsoring AB 817 (in year 2 of the process) and looking to reconfirm support with this new updated letter. The CRPD Advisory Board originally supported this bill at its April 20, 2023 meeting. 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.

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

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

Dear Assembly member Pacheco:

On behalf of 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 members of non-decision-making advisory bodies to participate remotely via two-way virtual teleconferencing without posting of their location.

Over the last 5 years we have had increased issues with finding local residents to serve on our Advisory Board. 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. During the COVID-19 global pandemic individuals who could not otherwise accommodate the time, distance, or mandatory physical participation requirements to engage locally were able to participate remotely, accessing 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.

AB 817 would remove barriers to leadership opportunities by providing a narrow exemption under the Ralph M. Brown Act for non-decision-making legislative bodies that do not take final action 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,

Mike Blondino
District Administrator
Carmichael Recreation and Park District

Joyce Carroll
Advisory Board Chair
Carmichael Recreation and Park District

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