



CALIFORNIA NEWS PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION CNPA Services, Inc.

2701 K Street, Sacramento, CA 95816 ♦ Ph: 916.288.6000 ♦ Fax: 916.288.6002 ♦ www.cnpa.com



April 8, 2021

Honorable Alex Lee
California State Assembly, Room 157
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support AB 339 (Lee)

Dear Assemblymember Lee,

We are writing on behalf of the California News Publisher’s Association, Ethnic Media Services, and Impremedia in support of AB 339, which will ensure all Californians have the ability to participate in the governmental decision-making process by expanding opportunities to join public meetings, beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

The bill also improves language access two-fold by increased translation and interpretation services for agendas and instructions for joining public meetings remotely, as well as during the meetings, in multiple languages that are based on the needs of the specific community the legislative body serves.

The pandemic has been a double-edged sword when it comes to access and participation in government. For those with access to broadband and technology, it has increased the ability to participate in government. But, for those who lack resources and live in more rural areas where broadband does not currently reach, there have been many challenges.

Existing inequities such as lack of broadband access or translation services create barriers that prevent many from accessing this opportunity. For the publications that serve millions of Californians that don’t speak English, these services are even more critical to help bridge the language barrier and best serve their readers.

AB 339 would enhance public participation at the state and local levels by ensuring that constituents have opportunities to join and comment at public meetings in-person, via a call-in option, and via an internet-based service option. AB 339 would also establish standards for posting both agendas and directions on joining meetings via teleconference technology in a timely manner and at an easily accessible location online. Finally, translation services would be expanded for the two major languages spoken by constituents, creating invaluable opportunities for non-English-speaking Californians to meaningfully engage in the democratic process.

Clearer standards that ensure the equitable provision of access to public meetings are necessary to ensure a government that is accountable to its constituents. Our democracy cannot function unless everyone is able to participate equally - regardless of ability to travel, internet access, or language fluency.

For all of these reasons, CNPA, Ethnic Media Services and ImpreMedia support AB 339 and we respectfully urge your “Aye” vote.

Sincerely,



Brittney Barsotti
General Counsel, CNPA

Sandy Close

Sandy Close
Director, Ethnic Media Services



Arturo Carmona
Senior Policy & Public Affairs Advisor, ImpreMedia

cc: Simon Grieve, CNPA Chairperson, Publisher, The Grunion, Beach Reporter, Palos Verdes Peninsula News
Jeff Glasser, CNPA Governmental Affairs Committee Chair, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, Los Angeles Times
Steve Falk, CNPA Governmental Affairs Committee Co-Chair, CEO Sonoma Media
Chuck Champion, CNPA President and Chief Executive Officer