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JOHN F. SZABO
CITY LIBRARIAN

July 22, 2021

Honorable Mayor Eric Garcetti
City of Los Angeles
Room 303, City Hall

Dear Honorable Mayor Garcetti
Dear Honorable Members of the City Council

RE: Board of Library Commissioners' Letter to City Council in Support of AB 703

The Board of Library Commissioners requests that the City Council support state legislation to make changes to the Brown Act to make telecommuting options more practical to Commissioners and members of the public.

Legislation has been proposed, including AB703, that will allow the temporary changes to the Brown Act, made to accommodate the Covid-19 safer-at-home directive, to remain in effect permanently. Specifically, changes that allow boards to conduct meetings by video conference (such as Zoom), and allow commissioners to participate virtually in a meeting when they are outside of the meeting's physical jurisdiction.

During the pandemic, the Board experienced firsthand the significant benefits of these changes.

The first change allows the Board to continue to conduct meetings via video conference, which encourages more people to participate, is more convenient for the public and commissioners, and greatly reduces the time, cost and environmental impact caused by the need to drive or take other transportation to a physical meeting. The Board of Library Commissioners has been delighted to welcome the robust participation of Angelenos in their virtual meetings. In addition, all materials associated with the meetings—including announcements, agendas and exhibits—are posted in digital format and available to the public online.

The second change allows commissioners to participate and vote whether they are in or out of their jurisdiction. The previous teleconference rule required members to post advanced notice about the meeting in their alternate location (home, business, hotel, etc.) and then also make that place available to potential public participation, which is difficult and unreasonable. Also, members calling from outside the jurisdiction were not counted toward the quorum, which undermines the effectiveness of such participation.

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Making these changes permanent will make it easier for commissioners to attend meetings, reduce the incidence of cancelled meetings due to a lack of quorum, and eliminate the impracticality of posting agendas in locations other than the physical meeting location.

Thank you for your consideration to support these changes, which will greatly benefit the people we serve.

Board of Library Commissioners:

Bích Ngọc Cao, President