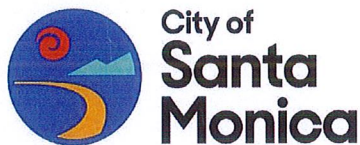


Rent Stabilization Board
Office of the Executive Director



Santa Monica Rent Control Board
Office of the Executive Director

August 24, 2021

Honorable Governor Gavin Newsom
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Extension of Allowance for Fully Remote Meetings for all Public Meetings of Legislative Bodies

Dear Honorable Governor Newsom,

We write to strongly urge you to extend the provisions articulated in Paragraph 42 of Executive Order N-08-21 related to the temporary suspension of Brown Act provisions requiring the physical presence of members of various legislative bodies at public meetings. As public entities with elected governing boards, we are deeply concerned about the potential expiration of the allowance for fully remote meetings at the end of September. Without an extension, our local legislative bodies – like most other public entities – will face the untenable challenge of attempting to conduct meetings accessible to the public while also complying with social distancing and other pandemic-related public health protections. Simply put, our facilities are not set up to allow for safe congregation of elected officials and members of the public during a time when COVID-19 viral transmission remains such a concern.

Current viral community spread has given rise to health concerns for both vaccinated and unvaccinated members of the public alike. If we were to go back to in-person public meetings in October, we will be putting members of our community at risk. Moreover, we face challenges regarding setting up a hybrid system of on-site and remote participation that will be technologically challenging. Without going into too much detail, we are not currently set up to hold all public meetings both in-person and with significant remote participation. We have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the public regarding their ability to participate in meetings since you granted the ability to hold them remotely during this public health crisis. Berkeley and Santa Monica remain committed to encouraging both public participation *and* public health safety.

We understand that Assemblymember Robert Rivas has introduced Assembly Bill 361 which would permit local jurisdictions to allow teleconferencing of public meetings during times when those cities make a determination that meeting in person would present imminent risks to the health or safety of attendees as a result of the emergency. We encourage you to support this bill,

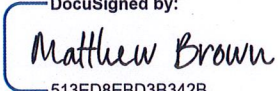
Request to Governor Newsom to extend provisions of Executive Order N-08-21
August 24, 2021
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but unless this legislation becomes operational before October 1, 2021, there will be a period where we will be required to gather unsafely.

Please consider extending the temporary suspension of Brown Act provisions requiring the physical presence of members of various legislative bodies at public meetings from September 30, 2021 to at least December 31, 2021. We continue to believe that this is the safest way to encourage public participation while protecting those who are elected to serve and those from the public who choose to participate.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter, and thank you for your exceptional leadership during this public health crisis. Please contact our lobbyist, Brian Augusta, if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,

DocuSigned by:

513ED8EBD3B342B...
Matt Brown
General Counsel/Acting Executive Director
Berkeley Rent Board

DocuSigned by:

ECC72B3A2E76404...
Tracy Condon
Executive Director
Santa Monica Rent Control Board

cc: Honorable Robert Rivas, Assemblymember, 30th Assembly District
Honorable Berkeley Mayor Jesse Arreguin and City Councilmembers
Honorable Santa Monica Mayor Sue Himmelrich and City Councilmembers