

Time to Correct a Bad Policy

On January 6, 2026, this Board implemented a revised public comment procedure requiring residents to consolidate comments on multiple agenda items into a single public comment period at the beginning of the meeting.

At the time, the Board committed to a six-month trial period to determine whether this change would improve efficiency, maintain transparency, and shorten meetings.

The results are now in, and the experiment has failed.

The revised format has failed to save time, failed to shorten meetings, and has artificially suppressed meaningful public engagement with the taxpaying community. On behalf of the Taxpayers Association of El Dorado County, I urge this Board to follow the data, acknowledge the results of this trial, and restore the historical practice of taking public comment as individual agenda items are called.

The primary justification for restricting when and how the public can speak was to streamline meetings. However, the data presented by staff directly refutes the idea that any efficiencies were achieved.

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A comparison of 12 regular meetings before implementation and 12 meetings under the new procedure shows meeting lengths actually increased. Meetings are longer, not shorter. Consolidating public testimony did not save any administrative time.

In short, the policy imposed new restrictions on public participation without delivering any measurable operational benefit.

The data also demonstrates that the taxpaying public was never the source of meeting bloat. Most residents use only a fraction of their allotted time. The overwhelming majority of citizens are respectful and concise.

Yet the public is the group being burdened by this policy.

While the procedural change failed to deliver any measurable time savings, it succeeded in damaging the relationship between the Board and the public.

Forcing residents who wish to comment on multiple agenda items to compress all of their thoughts into a single three-minute window at the beginning of the meeting is both a logistical and democratic failure.

It creates disjointed testimony, discourages participation, and completely separates public input from the very moment when the Board discusses, debates,

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and votes on a particular issue. Public comment should occur when the issue is before the Board, not hours earlier when neither the public nor the Board knows how the discussion will unfold.

This Board agreed to a six-month trial. The results are clear. The policy did not achieve its stated goals, and good governance requires the willingness to change course when the data supports it.

It is not a sign of weakness to admit that a policy experiment did not work; it is a sign of strong leadership.

On behalf of the Taxpayers Association of El Dorado County, I respectfully urge the Board to abandon the bundled public comment framework and restore the traditional item-by-item public comment process.

Doing so will improve transparency, strengthen public participation, and rebuild public trust in county government.

Thank you.

Lee Tannenbaum

President

El Dorado County Taxpayers Association

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