



Legislation Text

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Clerk of the Agricultural Commission recommending the Agricultural Commission, as a result of ongoing concerns related to COVID-19, approve findings pursuant to Government Code subsection 54953(e)(3) in order to allow for the continued use of virtual or hybrid Agricultural Commission meetings as authorized under Assembly Bill 361. (Cont. 2/9/2022, 3/9/2022, 6/8/2022, 7/13/2022, 8/10/2022, 9/14/2022, 9/29/2022, 10/12/2022, 11/9/2022, 1/11/23, 1/27/2023 Item 2)

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

Assembly Bill No. 361

CHAPTER 165

An act to add and repeal Section 89305.6 of the Education Code, and to amend, repeal, and add Section 54953 of, and to add and repeal Section 11133 of, the Government Code, relating to open meetings, and declaring the urgency thereof, to take effect immediately.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SAFE BOARD AND COMMISSION MEETINGS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Executive Order N-08-21 issued by Governor Newsom allows legislative bodies to hold meetings via teleconference and make meetings accessible electronically through September 30, 2021 without violating the Brown Act. Effective October 1, 2021, AB 361 will allow local legislative bodies to continue to allow remote meetings during a proclaimed state of emergency, if "state or local officials have imposed or recommended measures to promote social distancing."

The degree of safety from potential transmission of COVID-19 or other respiratory illnesses at in-person meetings is affected by a number of factors, including

- rates of disease in the community and possibility that people will attend while infectious
- transmissibility of the virus variants in circulation
- proportion of attendees who are vaccinated
- proportion of attendees with vulnerability to severe illness (e.g., older adults)
- proportion of attendees able and willing to adhere to masking or distancing guidelines
- quality of ventilation and adequacy of space within the meeting facility

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the California Department of Public Health both agree that the best way to stop COVID-19 transmission is to use a variety of approaches: vaccinations, masks, ventilation/filtration, physical distancing, and minimizing time spent indoors with crowds. When in-person meetings are necessary and the factors noted above indicate concern for potential COVID-19 transmission, I make the following recommendations.

Offer attendees a remote access option to the extent possible, while meeting the intent of the Brown Act about transparency and full participation.

Arrange seating to encourage staff and members of the public to physically distance.

Clearly post messages instructing people not to enter meeting venues when they feel unwell and to follow current guidelines for face-coverings, vaccination, and testing, when applicable.

Consider use of voluntary attendance sheets to collect names and contact information to assist in contact tracing, should any cases be linked to public meetings.

These recommendations comply with the requirements of AB 361, therefore allowing the virtual-attendance option to continue beyond September 30, 2021.