[Date]

The Honorable Alex Lee

Member of the California State Assembly

California State Capitol

Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Support for AB 339 (Lee): Public Participation**

Dear Assemblymember Lee:

[Name of organization] is writing in support of AB 339, which will ensure all Californians’ ability to participate in the governmental decision-making process by expanding opportunities to join public meetings and make public comment via call-in or internet-based service options, beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. The bill also improves language access through increased translation and interpretation services, and ensures that meeting agendas and instructions for joining public meetings remotely are posted in a timely manner and in multiple languages.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, teleconferenced meetings have provided a unique opportunity for Californians across the state to better participate in both local and statewide government meetings. However, the pandemic has simultaneously illustrated how existing inequities such as lack of broadband access or translation services create barriers that prevent many from accessing this opportunity. Further, the information needed to join these meetings is not always posted in a timely and easily accessible manner and a lack of interpretation services prohibits the millions of Californians who don’t speak English from participating in the democratic process.

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 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, [our organization] supports AB 339.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]