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May 31, 2023

The Honorable Anna Caballero  
Chair, Senate Committee on Governance and Finance  
1021 O Street, Suite 7620  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 557 (Hart) Open meetings: local agencies: teleconferences - SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Caballero,

The Health Officers Association of California, which represents the physician health officers of California's sixty-one city and county jurisdictions, supports AB 557, which would extend local teleconferencing provisions when a declared state of emergency is in effect by removing the sunset on AB 361.

Teleconferencing during the COVID-19 pandemic helped to protect public health by reducing the risk of virus transmission. Local governments were able to limit in-person contact and avoid large gatherings, a major source of COVID-19 transmission.

Remote meetings also made it easier for people to participate in local government without exposing themselves COVID-19, which is particularly important for vulnerable people at higher risk of severe illness, such as older adults and people with underlying health conditions.

Air pollution, wildfires, floods, and disease transmission present ongoing public health challenges in California, and local governments need the ability to respond to these emergencies and their constituents while limiting risk and exposure.

For these reasons, the Health Officers Association of California supports AB 557.

Sincerely,

Kat DeBurgh, MPH  
Executive Director  
Health Officers Association of California