

August 28, 2025



E-MAIL TRANSMITTAL / US REGULAR MAIL

The Honorable María Elena Durazo,
California State Senate, 26th District
1021 O Street, Room 7530
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 707 (DURAZO) OPEN MEETINGS: MEETING AND TELECONFERENCE REQUIREMENTS OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED

Dear Senator Durazo,

The City of San Pablo must respectfully **oppose SB 707** unless it is amended.

While our City strongly supports public transparency and accessibility, SB 707, as currently drafted, would impose costly and inequitable new mandates on local cities, without providing the resources or flexibility needed for its proper implementation.

SB 707 contains positive elements that recognize the need to modernize the Ralph M. Brown Act. However, its prescriptive requirements would create significant fiscal and operational challenges for our City, including:

- **Providing two-way telephonic or audiovisual access for all meetings, halting proceedings during any service disruption.**
- **Translating agendas into all “applicable languages” spoken by 20% or more of residents with limited English proficiency.**
- **Designating a public space for community-submitted translations, even if inaccurate or misleading.**
- **Creating and maintaining multi-language webpages for agendas, instructions, and meeting procedures.**
- **Expanding outreach efforts and electronic systems for agenda access.**

If enacted in its current form, SB 707 would require the City of San Pablo to upgrade or fully replace its audio-visual infrastructure and re-configure our current Council Chambers — at an estimated cost between \$60,000 - \$80,000, respectively.

Honorable Maria Elena Durazo, 26th District

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This bill as proposed would necessitate a compressed timeline of less than six months to conduct public procurement, acquire equipment, secure professional installation services, and conduct proper employee training by the proposed implementation date of January 1, 2026. Due to Proposition 42 (2014), these costs are also not reimbursable, placing the full financial burden entirely on the City's General Fund Operating Budget, with non-budgeted resources.

A minimum extension to January 1, 2027 is critical to ensure responsible implementation.

The bill also creates governance inequities across California: (1) Local cities of similar size are treated differently based solely on County population; (2) Compounding this disparity, the State of CA itself is exempt from the very mandates on enhancing open meetings and teleconference requirements it seeks to impose on local governments—an unjust double-standard.

San Pablo remains deeply committed to transparency and public engagement. We respectfully urge amendments to SB 707 that eliminate the most burdensome and costly requirements, ensure fair treatment of all local cities state-wide, and provide sufficient time and resources for proper compliance.

For these reasons, the City of San Pablo must respectfully oppose SB 707 unless it is amended to address these concerns.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Arturo Cruz, Mayor
City of San Pablo

cc: State Senator Jesse Arrequin, 7th District
State Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, 14th District
Samantha Brightman, Cal-Cities, Public Affairs Manager

San Pablo City Council
City Attorney
Assistant City Manager
City Clerk
Assistant City Clerk (Acting)