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April 8, 2022

The Honorable Alex Lee
California State Assembly
Capitol Office, 1021 O Street, Suite 6330
P.O. Box 942849, Sacramento, CA 94249

RE: AB 1944 (Lee) - SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Lee,

On behalf of the City of Cupertino, I am writing to express support for AB 1944 (Lee), which would amend the provisions of a local legislative body's use of teleconferencing in public meetings. This bill would allow the legislative body of a local agency to continue to conduct meetings and proceedings that are open to the public while maintaining social distancing to protect the health and safety of attendees.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, teleconference meetings provided a unique opportunity for Californians across the state to better participate in both local and statewide government meetings while maintaining social distance protocols. Many local elected officials and appointed members have also participated remotely in official business matters and have shown effective leadership while keeping themselves and their families healthy and safe.

During a declared state of emergency, a local agency can use teleconferencing as long as a quorum of the members participate from locations within the boundaries of the agency's jurisdiction. However, even with existing legislation, the body must take a majority vote to waive the teleconference requirement. If there is no majority vote, local officials who choose to teleconference are required to make their private addresses publicly known and accessible.

AB 1944 would ensure that local agencies have the ability to continue performing their official duties by allowing their members to teleconference into a meeting without having to reveal their private address. Additionally, livestreams of meetings are required whenever local elected officials teleconference into meetings, to allow members of the public to observe and participate in meetings, creating greater access to the public. Lastly, AB 1944 would provide members of the public the opportunity to address their elected officials either through a call-in

or video option, ensuring that the public is able to participate in the government process.

Providing livestreams and call-in or video options for public participation benefit those who have traditionally faced obstacles in interacting with local government, such as working families, parents without childcare, low-income communities, or people with disabilities. For these reasons, the City of Cupertino supports AB 1944.

Sincerely,



Darcy Paul
Mayor
City of Cupertino

cc: Senator Dave Cortese
Senator Josh Becker
Assemblymember Evan Low
Assemblymember Marc Berman