



# COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION  
DRIVE, ROOM 102A  
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

## SUMMARY REPORT

---

**Agenda Date:** 3/24/2026

---

**To:** Board of Supervisors, Sonoma County Water Agency Board of Directors, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space Board of Directors, and Community Development Commission Board of Commissioners

**Department or Agency Name(s):** County Executive's Office

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** M. Christina Rivera, 707-565-2341

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**Supervisorial District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

Resolution to authorize certain County Eligible Subsidiary Bodies to teleconference pursuant to Government Code section 54953.8.6

**Recommended Action:**

Adopt a Concurrent Resolution Authorizing Eligible Subsidiary Bodies to Use Teleconferencing for Meetings Pursuant to Government Code section 54953.8.6.

**Executive Summary:**

Recent amendments to the Ralph M. Brown Act, California's open meeting law governing local legislative bodies, provide expanded flexibility for remote participation in public meetings for certain eligible subsidiary bodies. These changes authorize the Board of Supervisors/Board of Directors/Board of Commissioners, herein referred to as "the Board," to permit eligible subsidiary bodies to use updated teleconferencing procedures under specified conditions. This item would allow those eligible bodies to adopt their own policies and utilize the new remote teleconference options.

**Discussion:**

Recent legislation, Senate Bill 707 (SB 707), enacted significant amendments to the Ralph M. Brown Act. Among these changes are updated provisions governing how members of certain eligible subsidiary bodies may participate in public meetings.

Under these new teleconferencing procedures, appointees of qualifying eligible subsidiary bodies may participate remotely without disclosing their location or requiring a physical quorum of members to be present at the meeting location. However, the law continues to require a designated physical meeting site to allow for in person public attendance and participation, and all other Brown Act public access and transparency requirements remain in effect.

SB 707 further clarifies the criteria used to determine which advisory bodies qualify as "eligible subsidiary bodies." Under SB 707, these bodies must be advisory committees created by the Board and must serve exclusively in an advisory capacity. To qualify, the subsidiary body cannot be authorized to take final action on legislation, regulations, contracts, permits, funding allocations, or other entitlements. In addition, the subsidiary body must not have primary subject-matter jurisdiction over specified areas, including elections,

budgets, police oversight, privacy, public library materials, or taxes and related spending proposals. Based on this statutory definition, tax oversight committees are not eligible, nor are bodies that take final action, such as the Planning Commission.

SB 707 requires that the Board (as the “parent” body) make findings to allow its eligible subsidiary bodies to use the new remote participation procedures initially and again every six months. Board authorization must find that remote participation would enhance public access to the subsidiary body’s meetings, that the public has been informed about the proposed remote participation format and given the opportunity to comment at a regularly scheduled meeting. The Board must also find that allowing teleconference meetings would help attract, retain, and diversify advisory body members. The Board retains the authority to prohibit the use of teleconferencing by the subsidiary body at any time. Once the Board grants authorization, the subsidiary body itself must approve the use of teleconferencing by majority vote before implementing the option.

If implemented, several procedural requirements apply to these meetings. At least one physical meeting location must be maintained and staffed where members not participating remotely are present and where the public may attend, observe, and participate. The meeting must allow two-way public participation, enabling members of the public to both observe the meeting and provide comment remotely through either a two-way audiovisual platform or a two-way telephonic option paired with a live webcast. If there is a disruption in the two-way access, the body may not take any additional actions until access is restored.

Remote subsidiary body members are generally required to appear on camera during the entire meeting unless a physical or mental condition requires them to participate without video. A member’s visual appearance may be discontinued only when technologically infeasible, such as when unreliable internet connectivity would be improved by disabling video. In such cases, the member must announce the reason for turning off their camera before doing so. Additionally, remote subsidiary body members must disclose whether any individuals aged 18 or older are present in the room with them and the general nature of their relationship to those individuals.

All votes must be taken by roll call, and the meeting minutes must reflect which members participated remotely.

The action before the Board is to adopt a resolution authorizing the following eligible subsidiary bodies to utilize the new teleconference procedures:

- Ag + Open Space Advisory Committee
- Behavioral Health Board
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Charles M. Schulz - Sonoma County Aviation Commission
- Community Development Committee
- Dry Creek Valley Citizen Advisory Council
- Emergency Medical Care Council
- Historical Records Commission
- Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Committee
- Mark West Area Municipal Advisory Committee

- Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Advisory Board
- North Sonoma Valley Municipal Advisory Committee
- Public Authority Advisory Committee
- Sonoma County Coast Municipal Advisory Committee
- Springs Municipal Advisory Committee

Staff recommends initially authorizing these particular bodies because they are already using virtual tools to broadcast meetings and are therefore equipped to allow for remote participation, enhancing access and participation for both the public and the subsidiary bodies. Additional eligible bodies could be authorized when the Board considers reauthorization in six months as required by SB 707.

If authorized, each approved subsidiary body must:

- Approve the use of teleconferencing by majority vote before using the new procedures.
- Ensure compliance with all applicable public access, noticing, and transparency requirements under the Brown Act.
- Maintain a physical meeting location for public attendance and participation.
- Demonstrate technological capacity to maintain either a two-way audiovisual platform or a two-way telephonic option paired with a live webcast.
- Maintain the necessary staffing resources to support the technological and on-site requirements.

Authorization may be rescinded by the Board at any time. Additionally, pursuant to statutory requirements, the authorization must be renewed by the Board every six months to remain in effect.

Staff and Counsel are working on a guidance document for authorized subsidiary bodies.

**Strategic Plan:**

N/A

**Racial Equity:**

**Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?**

No

While the current item does not have an accompanying Racial Equity Analysis, the Office of Equity (OOE) is currently conducting an assessment on the County's Boards and Commissions <https://sonomacounty.gov/board-of-supervisors-takes-first-step-toward-expanding-access-and-participation-on-county-boards-and-commissions> which will inform staff recommendations to strengthen the which will inform staff recommendations to strengthen the County's capacity to support these bodies. The OOE is working in collaboration with the County Executive's Office, the Clerk of the Board, and County Counsel to monitor legislative updates, such as SB 707, and assess its impacts on Sonoma County Boards and Commissions. The OOE expects to present initial findings and draft recommendations to the Board for feedback and direction later this year.

**Prior Board Actions:**

None

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY25-26 Adopted</b>	<b>FY26-27 Projected</b>	<b>FY27-28 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>			
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>			

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

While there are no direct fiscal impact for this particular item, the utilization of teleconference procedures will require certain technological and personnel resources to ensure compliance. The Board is authorizing eligible subsidiary bodies with the understanding that they have the existing capabilities to support the teleconference procedures without additional resources.

<b>Staffing Impacts:</b>			
<b>Position Title (Payroll Classification)</b>	<b>Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)</b>	<b>Additions (Number)</b>	<b>Deletions (Number)</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

While there are no direct staffing impacts for this particular item, the utilization of teleconference procedures will require certain technological and personnel resources to ensure compliance. The Board is authorizing eligible subsidiary bodies with the understanding that they have the existing capabilities to support the teleconference procedures without additional resources.

**Attachments:**

Current Resolution Authorizing Eligible Subsidiary Bodies to Use Teleconferencing for Meetings Pursuant to Government Code section 54953.8.6

**Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:**

None