



Community United in Lanare



Comunidad Unida en Lanare



Hmong
INNOVATING
POLITICS



July 21, 2020

Chairman Buddy Mendes
Vice Chairman Steve Brandau,
Supervisor Brian Pacheco
Supervisor Sal Quintero
Supervisor Nathan Magsig

Council President Miguel Arias
Council Vice President Paul Caprioglio
Councilmember Esmeralda Soria
Councilmember Luiz Chavez
Councilmember Nelson Esparza
Councilmember Mike Karbassi
Councilmember Garry Bredefeld

Re: Request for Remote Telephonic and Virtual Public Participation at July 28, 2020 Joint Workshop

Dear Chairman Mendes and Council President Arias:

Public participation is a crucial part of our democratic process. All residents must have the opportunity to have their voices heard in local, regional and state decision-making processes, in an inclusive and transparent manner, especially in times of crisis. The scale and impact of COVID-19 is unprecedented and it is likely the greatest and most urgent crisis you will face while in office. Now is the time to lead with courage, integrity and transparency.

The County and City workshop scheduled for July 28, 2020 will be the first time since the onset of COVID-19 that these two legislative bodies meet to discuss and coordinate emergency response. The County and City have an opportunity and responsibility to allow Fresno County residents to participate remotely and provide public comment during the meeting to inform decision making.

We respectfully request the Fresno County Board of Supervisors and Fresno City Council provide a teleconferencing option, with two-way communication options that allows either computer-users or phone-users to engage, with translation services for members of the public to participate at the July 28th joint workshop. Additionally, we request the release of past, proposed and expected COVID-19 expenditure plans at least three days before workshop to allow sufficient time for public review. Doing so will uphold the basic principles of a functioning democracy, protect vulnerable, at-risk and immunocompromised individuals from contracting COVID-19, allow you to respond appropriately to community concerns and ultimately, communicate leadership during unprecedented times. Furthermore, it will ensure compliance with Governor Newsom's [Executive Order N-25-20](#) (March 12, 2020), which grants local legislative and state bodies the authorization "to hold public meetings via teleconferencing and to make public meetings accessible telephonically or otherwise electronically to all members of the public seeking to attend and to address the local legislative or state body." The Order further states that state and local bodies should "adhere as closely as reasonably possible to the provisions of the Bagley-Keene Act and the Brown Act, and other applicable local laws regulating the conduct of public meetings, in order to maximize transparency and provide the public access to their meetings."

Please confirm the provision of a teleconferencing option to the public as soon as possible by confirming with me at lmartinez@leadershipcounsel.org or by phone at (559) 920-0558.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Leslie Martinez, Policy Advocate, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
Genoveva Islas, Executive Director, Cultiva La Salud
Sandra Celedon, President and CEO, Fresno Building Healthy Communities
Andy Levine, Deputy Director, Faith in the Valley
Nayamin Martinez, Director, Central California Environmental Justice Network
Jim Grant, Director, Social Justice Ministry, Diocese of Fresno
Luis Ojeda, Regional Organizing and Program Manager, ACLU Foundation of Northern California
Lourdes Olivia, Community Organizer, Dolores Huerta Foundation

Felicia Espinosa, Site Director and Senior Staff Attorney - Fresno Reentry Women & Employment Initiative

Nancy Xiong, Co-Director, Hmong Innovating Politics

Allis Druffel, Southern California Director, California Interfaith Power & Light

Pedro Hernández, Outreach and Engagement Manager-Climate Policies, Audubon California

Socorro Santillan, Director of Public Affairs - Planned Parenthood Mar Monte

Marianne Kast, President of the League of Women Voters of Fresno

Eric Payne, Executive Director, The Central Valley Urban Institute.