

Midcoast Community Council

An elected Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

representing Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar

PO Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038-0248 | midcoastcommunitycouncil.org

Gregg Dieguez | **Claire Toutant** | **Dan Haggerty** | **Scott Bollinger** | **Gus Mattammal**
Chair Vice-Chair Treasurer Secretary | **Ann Rothman** | **Kimberly Williams**

Date: April 12, 2023

To: Blanca Pacheco, Marc Berman, Spkr. Rendon, Sen. Becker, Suprv. Mueller

From: Midcoast Community Council

Subject: Support for Bill AB 817, and related efforts

The Midcoast Community Council is writing in support of bill AB817. As you know, serving the public is an honor and a privilege; however, many who might step up to serve are reluctant to do so because they have immunocompromised family members at home, and a strict in-person meeting requirement raises the risk to those family members unacceptably. AB 817, which creates more flexibility for people who are serving the public, alleviates those concerns, and therefore strengthens our democracy. Hybrid meeting formats also create more opportunities for the general public, and necessary staff and experts, to participate in meetings, thereby increasing public engagement, reducing travel time and emissions and increasing the exercise of our democratic franchise.

Sen. Becker's effort, SB 537, explicitly addresses the issue of immunocompromised family members, but does not yet provide the exemption for an unpaid, elected, Advisory Board such as the MCC. We hope he will remedy this omission in a future version thereof and that the Assembly and Senate can come together in a final Bill.

We urge you to vote yes on this bill, and on a companion bill in the Senate. In a time of increased public health risk and decreased faith in government, this bill can meaningfully improve and protect the lives of the general public, and those that serve them.

s/Gregg Dieguez, Chair