



# COACHELLA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT

*Established in 1918 as a public agency*

GENERAL MANAGER  
Jim Barrett

ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER  
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CLERK OF THE BOARD  
Sylvia Bermudez

ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER  
Dan Charlton

March 22, 2023

The Honorable Gregg Hart  
California State Assembly  
1021 O Street, Suite 6230  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 557 (Hart) – Support

Dear Assembly Member Hart:

The Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) serves approximately 300,000 residents in its 1,000 square-miles of service area ranging from the San Geronio Pass to the Salton Sea, mostly within the Coachella Valley area of Riverside County, including small areas within Imperial and San Diego counties. CVWD supports your bill, AB 557, which will allow the COVID-19 public meeting procedures adopted under AB 361 (R. Rivas, 2021) to be used by public agencies when facing other types of emergencies. The provisions of AB 361 allowed local agencies to remain accessible to their constituents when it would have otherwise been impossible to meet in-person safely. Important safeguards were included to ensure transparency and accountability, including the fact that the emergency provisions were only applicable in instances where the California Governor had declared a state of emergency.

While California seeks to transition to a post-COVID era, the threat of additional emergencies remains, as has been made abundantly clear by recent flooding and wildfires. Without AB 557, the procedures established by AB 361 to provide remote meeting flexibility to local agencies in emergency circumstances will expire at the end of this year. AB 557 will allow public agencies to remain accessible in future emergencies by eliminating the sunset on the emergency remote meeting procedures enacted by AB 361. Additionally, AB 557 would adjust the timeframe for the resolutions passed to renew an agency's temporary transition to emergency remote meetings to 45 days, up from the previous number of 30 days, to accommodate public agencies that meet on the same day every month.

For these reasons, CVWD urges support for AB 557.

Sincerely,

J. M. Barrett  
General Manager