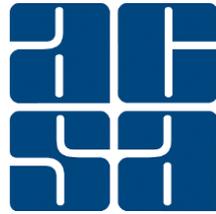




LEAGUE OF
CALIFORNIA
CITIES



CSDA



May 10, 2023

The Honorable Chris Holden, Chair
Assembly Committee on Appropriations
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **AB 1637 (Irwin): Local government: internet websites and email addresses**
OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED *(As amended 4/27/23)*

Dear Assembly Member Holden:

The undersigned organizations are regrettably opposed to Assembly Bill 1637, unless it is amended. This measure would require local agencies to secure and migrate to a new .gov or .ca.gov domain no later than January 1, 2026. It would also require all email addresses connected to reflect the updated domain within the same time frame.

We acknowledge the intended goal of this measure; however, our members have worked hard to establish websites that are known and trusted by the communities they serve. While the measure allows for website redirection, doing so will only add to confusion as residents are redirected from their trusted local agency website to a new landing page that would not comport to the addresses on public facing material including business cards, fleets, letterhead, elections, and other public outreach materials, etc. The result could compromise local communities' trust in their local leaders and would only create frustration in administering a transparent and user-focused government website.

In short, we remain deeply concerned about the added costs associated with migrating to a new domain and corresponding email addresses; public confusion that will potentially be created; and the absence of any dedicated resources to assist local agencies with this proposed migration.

Initial sampling of local governments has identified considerable costs and programmatic impacts that would result from AB 1637. Extrapolated to all local agencies throughout the state, cumulative costs to local agencies (cities, counties, special districts, school districts) are likely in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Further, we know that smaller local entities

will be challenged to meet the current deadline with existing staff. In this constrained fiscal climate, we are hard-pressed to consider a project of this scope as a statewide, jurisdiction-wide priority among other direct service responsibilities to local communities for which our members are already obligated.

To that end, we respectfully request consideration for amendments to address the following:

1. **Consider funding and implementing a statewide study.** We request that the state undertake a study of local agency cybersecurity needs, with participation and input of local agencies, and report the results to the Administration and the Legislature. Such a report should assist the Legislature and Administration in prioritizing funding for IT-related needs as well as properly identify where the problems currently lie with current best practices.
2. **Develop more reasonable timeframes for implementation.** The bill's one-size-fits-all approach over thousands of local agencies requires a more nuanced approach to implementation timeframes. We know that larger, well-staffed local agencies have reported needing at least more than one year to complete .gov migration, making it likely that smaller, less-resourced agencies would need considerably more time. Given the broad range in type of services provided at the local level among numerous local agencies, further conversation about what implementation should look like for a diverse group of local governments over time is needed.
3. **Include financial resources and state technical assistance for local agencies.** Federal resources that have been provided through the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) grant program are insufficient to cover costs associated with the transition to .gov. As a result, we respectfully request including an appropriation in the bill (or as part of the 2023-24 state budget process) to fund the mandate, with local agencies' obligations under the bill being contingent on receipt of such funds. Alternatively, an amendment making the provisions of the bill contingent upon a future appropriation that funds transition activities, with local agencies' obligations under the bill being contingent on receipt of such funds, would also be sufficient. We commit to continue to work closely with local agency IT professionals to develop a reasonable estimate of costs for your consideration.
4. **Remove mandate disclaimer suggesting that local agencies cover costs of this mandate by charging fees.** We collectively are unaware of any means by which a local agency may charge a fee to recoup costs associated with the transition to a .gov or .ca.gov domain. As drafted, we are concerned the disclaimer may be in conflict with Article XIII C (Proposition 26 of 2010); fees cannot be charged for the ability to access a public agency website due to constitutional limitations on local agencies' authority to impose fees and taxes or they lack fee authority outright.

Our respective organizations feel strongly that all proposed amendments must be incorporated in order to remove opposition. Without them, AB 1637 leaves local agencies with a considerable mandate that is likely unattainable for many local agencies, particularly in a period of economic decline. Collectively, our organizations and

respective members promote safe, recognizable, and trustworthy online services; however, AB 1637 will impose significant costs to local agencies across the state.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Damon Conklin, Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist, Cal Cities at dconklin@calcities.org, Kalyn Dean, Legislative Advocate, CSAC, at kdean@counties.org, Dorothy Johnson, Legislative Advocate, ACSA at djohnson@ACSA.org, Aaron Avery, Senior Legislative Representative, CSDA at aarona@cdda.net, Dane Hutchings, Legislative Advocate, City Clerks Association of California (CCAC) at dhutchings@publicpolicygroup.com, Alyssa Silhi, Legislative Advocate, California Association of Recreation and Parks Districts (CARPD) Asilhi@publicpolicygroup.com, Sarah Dukett, Policy Advocate, RCRC, at sdukett@rcrcnet.org, and Jean Kinney Hurst, Legislative Advocate, UCC at jkh@hbeadvocacy.com.

Sincerely,



Damon Conklin
Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist
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Kalyn Dean
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties



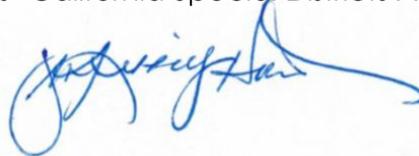
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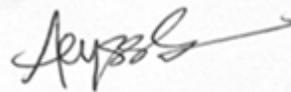
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cc: The Honorable Jacqui Irwin
Members, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
Jay Dickenson, Chief Consultant, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
William Weber, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus

