RESOLUTION - ACTION REQUESTED 2020-76

MEETING: February 18, 2020
TO: The Board of Supervisors
FROM: Dallin Kimble, County Administrative Officer
RE: Letter Opposing AB 315

RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION:
Approve a Letter Opposing Assembly Bill 315 Which Would Place New Burdensome Financial Restrictions and Reporting Requirements Specifically on Public Agency Advocacy Organizations; and Authorize the Board of Supervisors Chair to Sign the Letter.

Public agency advocacy organizations primarily rely on membership dues to fund grassroots advocacy programs, legal advocacy programs, educational activities as well as state and federal legislative advocacy. This bill would effectively limit or end a majority of these programs, significantly depriving public agency officials from understanding complex policy issues and finding ways to collaborate on best practices on a variety of national, state, regional and local issues impacting their residents, students and ratepayers.

Please see the attached letter and bill language for additional information.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:
The Board has approved letters supporting or opposing legislation.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:
Do not approve the letter. Individual members of the Board may write their own letters of support or opposition as desired.

ATTACHMENTS:
Letter of Opposition AB 315 (PDF)

RESULT: ADOPTED BY CONSENT VOTE [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Merlin Jones, District II Supervisor
SECONDER: Marshall Long, District III Supervisor
AYES: Smallcombe, Jones, Long, Cann, Menetrey
February 18, 2020

The Honorable Christina Garcia  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 315 (C. Garcia)—Local Government: Lobbying Associations  
Oppose

Dear Assembly Member Garcia:

On behalf of the County of Mariposa, we must oppose your Assembly Bill (AB) 315—
and other similar legislative efforts—which would place new burdensome financial
restrictions and reporting requirements specifically on public agency advocacy
organizations.

Public agency advocacy organizations primarily rely on membership dues to fund
grassroots advocacy programs, legal advocacy programs, educational activities as well as
state and federal legislative advocacy. This bill would effectively limit or end a majority of
these programs, significantly depriving public agency officials from understanding complex
policy issues and finding ways to collaborate on best practices on a variety of national,
state, regional and local issues impacting their residents, students and ratepayers.

It is difficult to overstate the impact this measure would have on the multitude of services
provided by public agency organizations. A non-exhaustive list of local public agency
association practices this measure would curtail or otherwise impact includes:

- Regional field coordination – individuals located throughout the state are employed
  for both logistical reasons as well as fostering regional coordination/cooperation and
  ensuring diverse views are heard and represented. Given the sheer size, complexity
  and diversity that make up California’s public agencies, it is incredibly important that
  we provide frequent opportunities for local officials to come together to learn about
  emerging policy trends and to discuss non-partisan approaches to solving local
  issues—learning from one another to better serve the people of California.

- Public agency financing – access to grants, loans, scholarships, or other means of
  financing for local public agency association members for things like infrastructure,
  staff professional development, and workshops meant to deepen understanding of
  highly-technical issues. The California public is better served by agencies that are
  fiscally-sound and well-equipped to weather any potential recession.
• Public awareness/education campaigns – long-running efforts to educate the public about resources and tools available to them that are offered by their public agencies, as well as campaigns seeking to highlight the efforts of local public agencies to effectively serve their communities. Ensuring that Californians are aware of and have access to any public agency resources at their disposal is of utmost importance.

• Legal resources – guidance to local public agencies regarding best practices, statutory and/or legal requirements, and other legal questions. Californians are better served by their local public agencies when these agencies are knowledgeable of ever-changing laws and regulations and are acting on sound legal advice.

Problematically, AB 315 leaves unanswered the question of what qualifies as an “educational activity.” Absent a definition, public agency associations would be forced to make determinations of fact as to whether or not the purpose of any particular event necessitating travel qualifies as “educational.” Worse still, public agency associations looking to avoid any possible legal penalties arising from this measure may instead choose to forego any and all travel throughout the state, depriving their memberships, as well as the state, of valuable resources. Furthermore, AB 315 would essentially dictate the mission, services and offerings of all of California’s public agency associations.

Many of the organizations that would be impacted by this measure have been in existence for well over 100 years. They are good actors who work tirelessly to engage federal and state government officials in a respectful and collaborative manner. As a member of several of these organizations, the County of Mariposa believes that this measure is unwarranted and respectfully must oppose this bill.

Sincerely,

Kevin Cann, Chair
Mariposa County Board of Supervisor