



Senate Bill 272

Local Government Open Data Act

SUMMARY

Senate Bill 272 would require all local governments to produce a list of the software and systems they use to collect and maintain public information, such as reports on economic activity and public services. The bill requires that catalog of systems be made available to the public under the California Public Records Act.

ISSUE

Local government agencies throughout California possess a potentially powerful tool for improving the lives of Californians: data. In too many cases, however, local agencies – and the constituents they serve – do not know what data they have collected or how to access it. SB 272 will identify what information is being kept by local agencies, how it is maintained, and who is responsible. Publishing a catalog of this information will reveal how accessible and usable the information is for public review and analysis, and immediately empower Californians to utilize this information.

There are thousands of local public agencies that collect information on critical government programs and services. The data include building permits and public parks to potholes and public transportation. Harnessing the power of this locally generated data could help spur economic growth, tackle major infrastructure issues and set millions of Californians on a path toward upward mobility. Properly gathered and clearly understood data would also help empower state and local agencies to collaborate more effectively and improve service delivery.

From public bus times in San Francisco to maps of fire hazards in Santa Cruz County, local agencies statewide are already turning internally gathered data into usable information, all to the public's benefit. With a better grasp of what data local agencies have available, those managing and overseeing the agencies will be better equipped to make informed decisions; from allocation of limited resources to the best venues for targeted economic growth policies.

Smarter governments work better and inspire confidence in those they serve, strengthening the connection between government and the people. Inventorying the systems used to collect and maintain public information at the local level is a vital first step in building that trust and using the power of public engagement to solve California's most critical challenges.

SB 272 (HERTZBERG)

In making California local government data more accessible to the public, SB 272 (Hertzberg) would amend the California Public Records Act to require local governments to create a catalog of enterprise information systems and the data those systems contain. These catalogs would include who maintains the information, how it is stored and how often that data is collected. This bill would allow both government and the public to better understand how local government serves *all* Californians.



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