



Senate Bill 272 Local Government Open Data Act

SUMMARY

Senate Bill 272 would require all local government agencies to conduct system-wide inventories of all data the agencies collect and make that information 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 collection. In too many cases, however, local agencies do not know what data they have collected or where the data came from or how the data was compiled. Harnessing the power of 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 could also help empower local agencies. This would encourage the agencies to work together more effectively and to intelligently allocate resources to better deliver public services.

Within California's 58 counties and 482 cities, there are thousands of agencies that collect information. From water use and public parks to potholes and public transportation, the harnessing of this data stands to improve understanding, comprehension and long-range planning. For most Californians, local agencies are the ones that most directly impact their lives. Therefore, a better, more complete understanding of the value of data can only improve how governments are operated. Creating a system where local agencies can use data to communicate and operate would also make government more effective. California would then be better able to improve the lives of millions of Californians.

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 overseeing the agencies would be better equipped to make informed decisions, from allocation of limited social services to the best venues for targeted economic growth. Smarter governments work better and inspire confidence in those they serve, strengthening the connection between government and the people.

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 conduct an inventory of information that is collected. These inventories would include who maintains the information 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.