



VISALIA

Senate Bill (SB) 707

The New Brown Act

*Presented by:
Administration*

Purpose behind SB 707

Enhances public access, strengthens transparency, and expands participation in local government meetings.

- Expands teleconferencing for members
- Requires remote public participation
- Increases language access and inclusivity
- Establishes specific rules, timelines, and requirements

Eligible Legislative Body

[Govt. Code § 54953.4]

Applies to:

- **City councils (30,000+ population)**
- **County boards of supervisors (30,000+ population)**
- **City councils in counties (600,000+ population)**
- **Certain special district boards (if thresholds are met)**

City of Visalia

- **Council is the only eligible legislative body**
- **Commissions and committees are not subject to the new requirements**

Key Requirements

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- Remote participation
 - Technology disruption policy
 - Language access
 - Community outreach
 - Website and agenda access updates

Language Access Requirements

Agenda Translation

[Govt. Code § 54953.4]

Agendas must be translated into all “applicable languages”

Based on State-defined thresholds

Public Access

[Govt. Code § 54953.4(b)(3)(A)]

Accessible meeting webpage with instructions

Clear access to agendas, participation options, and translations

Posting Requirements

[Govt. Code § 54953.4(c)(3)-(4)]

Translated agendas must be publicly posted.

Space provided for community-posted translations

Interpretation & participation

[Govt. Code § 54953.4(b)(2)(A)-(C)]

Allow (non-disruptive) live translation

Provide reasonable accommodations (space, time, equipment)

The law provides for a maximum of three language thresholds.

The City of Visalia met the applicable requirement for Spanish.

Outreach Requirements

Govt. Code § 54953.4(b)(3)(C)

1. Reasonable efforts

Focus on reaching underrepresented and non-English-speaking communities.

This includes providing translated materials and making information accessible so all residents can participate.

2. Law provides flexibility

SB 707 allows local discretion in how outreach is conducted.

There is no legal requirement to target specific groups, giving the City flexibility to tailor efforts to community needs.

3. Council guidance

Council input will help identify priority groups for outreach and engagement.

Examples include media serving non-English speakers and civic, neighborhood, and community Organizations.



SB 707 – Internet Disruption Policy

[Govt. Code § 54953.4(b)(1)(A)(i)(I)]

Internet Disruption Protocol

- Open session must be pause immediately

Cannot resume until:

- Issue is resolved, or
- One hour has passed, whichever comes first

Closed Session

Council may convene into closed session during disruption

If Disruption Exceeds One Hour

- Resume to adjourn, or
- Continue with findings:
 - Good faith efforts were made to restore service
 - Public interest outweighs remote participation

Teleconferencing & Remote Participation Requirements

Member Teleconferencing

Traditional Brown Act

[Govt. Code § 54953(b)]

- Locations posted & open to public
- Quorum within jurisdiction
- In-person participation required

COVID-Era Rules

[Govt. Code § 54953.8 – 54953.8.7]

- No location posting required
- Fully remote meetings allowed
- Real-time public access & comment

SB 707 (Just Cause & Disability)

[Govt. Code § 54953(c) & Govt. Code § 54953.8]

- No location posting required
- Majority within jurisdiction
- Two-way remote participation required

Remote Participation Requirements

[Govt. Code § 54953.4]

- Two-way telephonic service, OR audiovisual platform required
- Real-time public comment required

Equal Participation Required:

- Same time limits as in-person speakers
- Same ability to address the Council

Requirements apply to City Council meetings as an eligible legislative body and are effective July 1, 2026

Responding to Disruptive Behavior (SB 707)

SB 707 affirms the presiding officer's authority to maintain order by addressing disruptive conduct in meetings, whether in person or remote. Actions must be based on behavior, not speech content, and meetings must remain accessible.

AUTHORITY TO ACT

- Disruptive participants may be removed
- Applies to in-person and remote (e.g., zoom disruptions)

PROCESS & EXCEPTIONS

- Warning required before removal
- Exception: true threat of force
- Remote participants may be muted or removed

MAINTAINING ORDER

- Room may be cleared and re-opened to appropriate participants
- Cannot adjourn to an unannounced location (legal precedent)

Thank You!

