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April 29, 2009

The Honorable Anna Caballero
California State Assembly, District 28
State Capitol Building, Room 5119
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 715 (Caballero) City Ordinances: Publishing and Posting Requirements.
Notice of SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Caballero:

The League of California Cities is pleased to inform you that we strongly support your AB 715. This bill would authorize a city, within 15 days after the passage of an ordinance, to post the ordinance on its official Web site and to mail notice of passage of the ordinance to those who have filed a written request for mailed notices in lieu of publishing the ordinance in the newspaper. This measure would save costs for cities and recognizes advances in technology without compromising public access to government actions.

The publishing requirement of municipal ordinances has largely been unchanged in over one-hundred years. During the 25th Legislative Session, in 1883, the “Act to provide for the classification of municipal corporations” was enacted. This act stipulated that “every ordinance be signed...and published at least once in a newspaper...or printed and posted in at least three public places...” The members of the Senate and Assembly in 1883 could not have imagined how technology would revolutionize the way government could or would communicate with its constituency.

Broad public access is provided throughout the entire process of adopting an ordinance. To pass a municipal ordinance a number of requirements must be met, not including the effort to get public buy-in. A typical process for just the development of an ordinance could take months, which includes public participation. Prior to adopting an ordinance, a city must hold two public meetings complying with the required 72-hour regular meeting notice under the Ralph M. Brown Act. There are multiple opportunities where the public is encouraged to participate—and does—in the process. Once adopted, the final action is required to be published including the text of the ordinance in a generally circulated newspaper. Posting a council’s final action as well as the adopted ordinance on a city’s official Web site can provide the public with easier and greater access than when printed in a newspaper given costs of subscriptions.

Your bill brings California’s cities into the 21st Century, offers greater public access to government action, eliminates waste, and potentially saves taxpayer dollars. For these reasons, the League strongly supports AB 715. If you have any questions regarding the League’s position, please do not hesitate to contact me at: 916-658-8254.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Natasha M. Karl".

Natasha M. Karl
Legislative Representative

cc: Chair and Members, Assembly Local Government Committee
Consultant, Assembly Local Government Committee
Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus