



June 7, 2023

Assembly Public Safety Committee  
The Honorable Reggie Jones Sawyer, Committee Chair  
1020 N Street, Room 111  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 602 Support Letter (Authors: Senator Archuleta, Senator Seyarto, and Senator Calderon)**

Dear Committee Members:

The Inland Empire Coalition of Mayors, comprising mayors from cities in San Bernardino and Riverside counties, wishes to express its support for Senate Bill 602 (SB 602). SB 602 will help local governments deal with public nuisance and graffiti issues by extending the timeframes that Letters of Agency between peace officers and absentee property owners have, to remain in effect. The challenges posed to local communities by the proliferation of criminal public blight and nuisance activity are curtailed by active Letters of Agency programs.

Many of our local business and property owners within San Bernardino and Riverside counties have contacted their city leaders, and state representatives, to find a better way of managing what is commonly referred to as "Trespass Letters." Existing law requires the owner, the owner's agent, or the person in lawful possession of private property to make a separate request to a peace officer on each occasion when the peace officer's assistance is needed in dealing with a trespass, except when a single request for peace officer assistance is made for a period not to exceed twelve (12) months.

Processing "Trespass Letters" is becoming an increasing burden on law enforcement clerical staff and businesses throughout our County requiring hundreds of hours to process, and SB 602 addresses the burden. For example, the Riverside County Sheriff's department processes between 1,500 – 2,000 trespass letters annually. The Moreno Valley Station (our largest station) processed 747 trespass letters in 2021, the Lake Elsinore Station processed 430 trespass letters in 2022, and the Southwest Station processed 412 trespass letters in 2022.

SB 602 allows for businesses to make a single request, on a form provided by the law enforcement agency, for a period of three years (See SB 602 amendment to Penal Code §602(o)(1)). This will reduce the time needed for clerical staff to process these letters and allow them to focus on other higher priority public safety matters.

SB 602 also allows for law enforcement agencies to accept electronic submissions of these requests (See SB 602 amendment to Penal Code §602(o)(3)). Electronic submissions will ease the burden on local businesses to have to come to local agencies in person giving them more time to focus on business matters. Electronic submissions will allow law enforcement agencies to keep an electronic database of the letters making it easier for patrol deputies to access which businesses have letters on file. As can be seen, SB 602 addresses the burden on both law enforcement clerical staff and business throughout our region.

In previous versions of SB 602 (i.e., SB 1110) opponents presented concerns regarding the five-year effective period within the bill, fraudulent requests, and a possible change of ownership within that time frame. SB 602 addresses those concerns by shortening the five-year period to a three-year period, decreasing the possibility of a change in ownership within that time frame. SB 602 also requires a request for assistance to expire on transfer of ownership, eliminating the concern of stale trespass letters. To prevent fraudulent requests, SB 602 adds additional safeguards by requiring requests to be made in a notarized writing. The costs and time associated with obtaining a notarized written letter will deter fraud. SB 602 has addressed the concerns of the five-year effective period, fraudulent requests, and the possible change of ownership.

Opponents to previous versions of SB 602 stated the bill is bad public policy which will result in “innocent hikers being arrested.” The argument of “innocent hikers being arrested” fails to acknowledge that Penal Code §602 requires a trespasser (the hiker) “willfully” trespass (i.e., have knowledge) to be convicted of trespass. Penal Code §602 already addresses those concerns by requiring notices declaring closure “at intervals not greater than one mile along the exterior boundaries,” or the property must be “posted as being closed.” (See Penal Code §602(o)(1) and §602(p)). Hikers who “innocently” cross lands or unincorporated areas would not fall within the legal requirements of Penal Code §602 and therefore would not be innocently “ensnared” by a trespass letter.

Opponents to previous versions of SB 602 stated the bill will result in “increased costs to the taxpayer.” As stated above, SB 602 will allow for businesses and law enforcement agencies to submit and accept electronic letters. This will reduce the number of employees required to accept, process, and file trespass letters. A reduction of required public employees, hours, and supplies required to process letters will effectively reduce costs to the taxpayer rather than increase costs to the taxpayer. Therefore, SB 602 addresses the concern of increased taxpayer costs.

For the above reasons, the Inland Empire Coalition of Mayors respectfully requests your support for SB 602 to ease the burden on businesses and property owners, reduce the amount of time our law enforcement department members spend processing these requests, and to standardize this procedure statewide by requiring a notarized writing.

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia Lock Dawson  
Mayor, City of Riverside



Zak Schwank  
Mayor, City of Temecula



Dr. Lisa Deforest  
Mayor, City of Murrieta



Michael Vargas  
Mayor, City of Perris



Natasha Johnson  
Mayor, City of Lake Elsinore



Robin Grundmeyer  
Mayor, City of Norco



Bill Zimmerman  
Mayor, City of Menifee



Ulises Cabrera  
Mayor, City of Moreno Valley



Deborah Robertson  
Mayor, City of Rialto



Chris Barajas  
Mayor, City of Jurupa Valley

Cc: City of Riverside Legislative Delegation