

Strengthening the Transparent Policymaking Process: Enhancing the Review of Substantive Policy Motions at County Cluster Meetings

For more than a year, the Los Angeles County (County) “Motions at Cluster” review process has provided additional transparency and accountability tools. Established on a pilot basis and approved for continuation through the August 12, 2025, motion titled, *Maintaining Transparency in Board Policymaking through the Cluster Review Process*¹, this framework ensures that substantive motions receive structured vetting by Board of Supervisors (Board) deputies and department stakeholders, as well as input from the public, before Board consideration. This has helped the public, stakeholders, and County departments analyze proposals, raise concerns early, and collaboratively refine actions before they reach the Board.

In the initial report back analyzing the original pilot, benefits included department leaders and community partners reporting that the Cluster process has improved interdepartmental coordination, reduced operational confusion, strengthened fiscal analysis, and increased transparency.² It has created space for thoughtful public engagement, early identification of key issues, and more robust policymaking aligned with the Board’s priorities. Several high-visibility motions have been substantively amended

¹ <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/205870.pdf>

² See <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/198781.pdf>.

- MORE -

MOTION

MITCHELL	_____
HORVATH	_____
HAHN	_____
BARGER	_____
SOLIS	_____

following input from departments, the public, and Board deputies during Cluster meetings, ultimately strengthening their implementation.

However, following an administrative clarification by the Executive Officer of the Board, the current continuation of the Motions at Cluster process is scheduled to sunset at the end of this calendar year unless further Board action is taken. This presents an important opportunity not only to reaffirm the Board's commitment to transparency and good governance, but also to enhance processes based on lessons learned from the pilot period.

To preserve this meaningful reform, ensure continuity, and strengthen clarity around scope, exemptions, and procedures, the Rules of the Board must be updated to make the Motions at Cluster process permanent.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

- 1) Direct the Executive Officer of the Board (EO), in consultation with County Counsel, to revise Section 22.1(g) of the Rules of the Board to state that, "This Section shall become effective for member motions to be introduced for the January 21, 2025, Board meeting and shall stay in effect until repealed." This revision shall extend the Cluster Motion Review Process for all substantive Board motions (see Directive 2).
- 2) Direct County Counsel, in coordination with the EO and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), to ~~prepare amendments~~ section 22.1 of the Rules of the Board ~~section 22.4~~ within 60 days to:
 - a) Clearly define and distinguish "substantive" from "non-substantive" motions ~~and directives~~ (that is, motions ~~and directives~~ that propose policy, operational, fiscal, or programmatic actions affecting County departments or services, as currently defined in the Rules of the Board).
 - b) Clearly define all exemption categories ~~(including criteria for their application)~~, namely: declarations and ratifications of emergency and all recovery and related actions; fee waivers; reward motions; adjournments in a deceased person's memory; non-substantive motions, ceremonial proclamations and acknowledgments (without

substantive directives); presentation of scrolls; nominations and appointments to boards and commissions, or other bodies; ~~procedural~~ motions related to Board meeting scheduling; motions involving the land acknowledgement statement; ~~items~~ motions related to the Board's annual reorganization including the election of the Chair Pro Tem; motions directly pertaining to declared emergencies; and motions for which the Board finds that an emergency situation (pursuant to Gov't Code §54954.2(b)(1)) or urgency (pursuant to Gov't Code §54954.2(b)(2)) exists.

- c) Designate the Board Chair's Office, in consultation with County Counsel, as the authority to approve exemptions and resolve disputes related to Cluster assignment or process applicability.
 - d) Designate the Board Chair's Office, in consultation with the CEO, to determine the most appropriate Cluster through which each motion should be introduced.
 - e) Section 22.1(b), (d), and (e) to remain as written based on the August 12, 2025 Board motion.
- 3) Direct all Department Heads to ensure that department subject-matter representatives attend Clusters and are available to respond to questions and clarify implementation considerations on motions that impact their department.
 - 4) Direct the EO CEO, in consultation with the Board Chair of each Cluster ~~EO~~ and the Director of the Internal Services Department (ISD), to explore technology options to improve public accessibility and engagement at Cluster meetings by standardizing public comment rules across all Clusters — including speaking time limits, the designated points in the agenda when public comments are invited, hybrid participation protocols, language access, and accessibility standards.
 - 5) Direct the EO CEO, in consultation with the Director of ISD, to assess and implement any technology changes that are needed to ensure that Cluster Meeting participants can effectively see, hear, and participate in Cluster

Meetings, whether they participate virtually or in person.

- 6) Direct the CEO, in consultation with the Board Chair's office, to establish a standardized agenda format to be used consistently across all Cluster meetings.
- 7) Standardize the Economic Development and Policy Committee ~~as a Cluster body~~ on equal standing as the "Original Five" Clusters, with the same support from the CEO, EO, Department of Economic Opportunity, and ISD. In addition, rename this body the "Workforce and Economic Development Cluster."
- 8) ~~Establish~~ Standardize the Homeless Policy Deputies Meeting ~~as a Cluster body~~ on equal standing as the "Original Five" Clusters, with the same support from the CEO, EO, Department of Homeless Services and Housing, and ISD. In addition, rename this body the "Homelessness Cluster." Homelessness Cluster to be added to section 22.1(a) as an additional policy cluster along with the existing six policy clusters in section 22.1(a).

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