

# **Editorial: A strong bill to keep public agencies public**

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One of the news media's most important functions in a democracy is to constantly remind public agencies about that "public" part of their name. Too often, government officials try to conduct the public's business in private, and the results can be disastrous for taxpayers (just ask those in the city of Bell).

The California Public Records Act is a key tool in keeping public agencies public. Enacted nearly 50 years ago, the law assures all residents and the media have prompt access to most records – so we know what government is up to and can be involved in important decisions.

The act requires cities, counties, schools, water districts and others to make government documents and data available to the public within 10 days of a request in most cases.

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