



## PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY for our CAPITOL

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<http://savecalcap.org>

May 12, 2021

The Honorable Ken Cooley  
Chair, Assembly Rules Committee  
Via Assembly Rules Website

Re: AB 706 (Cooley) Oppose

Dear Assemblymember Cooley:

Public Accountability for our Capitol is opposed to AB 706 (Cooley) because it is trying to correct authority granted in AB 1826, an urgency measure, which appropriated \$20 million for renovating and restoring the historic State Capitol. Proposition 3 (1980) specifically states that funds may not be authorized for work on the historic capitol if approved using an urgency bill. We believe this non-urgency bill is an attempt to correct that legal problem. The intent of AB 706, as we understand it from the author's office, is to ensure that the governance structure meets requirements in the State Constitution.

In addition, we oppose the governance structure established for the Annex Project, as authorized by AB 1826 (Chapter 40). The agreement authorized by statute is an MOU (adopted 11/9/2018) among the Joint Rules Committee, the Department of Finance, and the Department of General Services. The MOU authorizes a three-person Executive Committee of Chair Cooley, Senator Hertzberg, and Erin Suhr, Director of Operations of the Governor's Office, to make decisions about scope and expenditures of the entire Capitol Annex Project. The only vote the JRC has taken on this massive Capitol Annex Project was in September 2019, when JRC voted to approve the "Project Overview and Sequencing Report" (POS) in draft form. The POS has been kept from the public, despite several Legislative Open Record Act (LORA) requests.

The \$1 billion Capitol Annex Project is being decided in private by only three voting members: two legislators and one Governor's representative. This governance structure prevents the public and legislative members from understanding why certain decisions were made about the Capitol Annex Project. We believe your constituents would oppose the current proposed Annex Project, which includes a new Annex building, demolition of the west steps and gathering place, and damage to Capitol Park.

We are also concerned that AB 706 could become a vehicle for later amendments that could be even worse.

For these reasons, we are opposed to AB 706. Thank you for your attention to this letter.

Sincerely,

Dick Cowan for Public Accountability for our Capitol