

Date of Hearing: April 22, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1821 (Pacheco) – As Amended April 6, 2026

Policy Committee: Judiciary

Vote: 8 - 2

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

**SUMMARY:**

This bill converts the California Public Records Act's (CPRA) 10-day and 14-day response deadlines from calendar days to business days.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

No known state impact. To the extent the bill reduces overtime costs or litigation exposure associated with missed deadlines, savings would accrue to affected state agencies (various funds) and are likely minor and not quantifiable.

**COMMENTS:**

1) **Purpose.** As explained by the author:

In recent years, public agencies have seen a significant increase in public records requests. As digital communication has expanded, submitting requests – often in high volume – has become easier than ever. Some requests are unusually large or require substantial staff time to fulfill. When a small number of requests consume a disproportionate share of resources, agencies can face challenges keeping up with all requests in a timely manner while still providing essential services.

AB 1821 specifies that processing agencies' response times should be tied to business days rather than calendar days. This small change ensures that agencies' timelines actually align with the hours they work. As a result, agencies may continue to respond to requests in a timely manner without being held to timelines that fall outside of standard business or processing hours.

2) **Background.** The right of public access to government records is enshrined in the California Constitution. The California Public Records Act provides that public records are open to inspection during office hours of a public agency, unless exempted. Under existing law, upon receiving a request for public records, an agency must determine within 10 calendar days whether the request seeks copies of disclosable records in its possession and promptly notify the requester of its determination. In unusual circumstances — such as the need to search

field facilities, examine voluminous records, consult with other agencies, or compile data — an agency may extend this deadline by up to 14 additional calendar days.

Under the current calendar-day standard, weekend and holidays continue to toll against the agency's response deadline, even though most staff responsible for responding to the request are not working. A request received late on a Friday, for example, effectively reduces the agency's response deadline from 10 days to eight days. This bill addresses this discrepancy by converting both the 10-day and 14-day calendar day deadlines to business day deadlines.

- 3) **Support and Opposition.** This author-sponsored bill is supported by several cities and organizations that represent public agencies, who argue that the change from calendar to business days will help agencies comply with CPRA more effectively and consistently, especially as the number and scope of requests continue to grow. The opposition to this bill spans the political spectrum, including the First Amendment Coalition, ACLU California Action, Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, government accountability groups, and others. They argue that the existing timeline does not present an undue burden, and that extending initial-response deadlines undermines the intent of the CPRA, and compounds downstream delays.

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