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BEFORE THE CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION  
450 N STREET  
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA  
STATE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

JUNE 27, 2023  
CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION  
BOARD MEETING

---o0o---  
ITEMS 8 AND 9  
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1 APPEARANCES

2 For the Board of  
3 Equalization:

Honorable Antonio Vazquez  
Chair

4 Honorable Sally J. Lieber  
5 Vice Chair

6 Honorable Ted Gaines  
First District

7 Honorable Mike Schaefer  
8 Fourth District

9 Hasib Emran  
10 Appearing for Malia M. Cohen  
11 State Controller  
(per Government Code  
Section 7.9)

12 For the Board of  
13 Equalization Staff:

Yvette Stowers  
Executive Director

14 Henry Nanjo  
15 Chief Counsel  
Legal Department

16 Mary Cichetti  
17 Clerk  
Board Proceedings and  
18 Support Services

19 Cathy Taylor  
20 Chief  
Board Proceedings and  
Support Services

21 Public Speaker:

Christine Lee  
22 President  
23 California Assessors' Association  
(Telephonically)

24

25

1	INDEX	
2		PAGE NO
3	Item 8	1
4	Item 9	25
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
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1 STATE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION  
2 450 N STREET, SACRAMENTO  
3 JUNE 27TH, 2023

4 ---o0o---

5 **ITEM 8**

6 ---o0o---

7 MS. CICHETTI: Our next item on the agenda is  
8 Item No. 8, Board Member Matters and Initiatives:  
9 Specialized Unit Within the State Board of  
10 Equalization's Legal Department to Support and Address  
11 the Needs of Small and Mid-Sized County Assessor  
12 Offices.

13 Boards discussion and possible action related  
14 to the direction -- to directing the Executive Director  
15 to provide the Board recommendations about establishing  
16 a specialized unit within the Legal Department to ensure  
17 legal matters elevated by small and mid-sized County  
18 Assessors' Offices are handled expeditiously.

19 Ms. Stowers is present here, and this item is  
20 being presented by Ms. Cohen.

21 MR. VAZQUEZ: Is Ms. Cohen on the line, or are  
22 you going to handle that?

23 MR. EMRAN: I'll be presenting on her behalf  
24 today.

25 MS. CICHETTI: Okay.

1                   MR. VAZQUEZ: Deputy Controller, go ahead.

2                   MR. EMRAN: Thank you, Chairman.

3                   MR. EMRAN: So I'm really excited today on  
4   behalf of Controller Cohen to present to you a proposal  
5   for the creation of a specialized unit within the Board  
6   of Equalization's Legal Office to support and address  
7   the needs of small and mid-sized counties.

8                   There was a memorandum distributed this  
9   morning to all you Board Members. And essentially it's  
10  an outline that, because of the complex -- complexities  
11  inherent in our property tax system, compared to more  
12  well-funded and well-resourced larger county County  
13  Assessors from our small and mid-sized counties are  
14  often left without adequate resources to expand  
15  professional staffing, retain legal counsel, and  
16  alleviate retention challenges.

17                  This disparity often creates a dilemma where a  
18  County Assessor will be compelled to make a decision  
19  based on independent judgment rather than sound legal  
20  advice and guidance.

21                  This is where the Controller believes there's  
22  an opportunity for the Board of Equalization to fill  
23  this void.

24                  The Controller recommends that there be  
25  consideration given to the creation of a specialized

1 legal unit within the BOE Legal Department to  
2 specifically address the needs of our small and  
3 mid-sized County Assessors' Offices.

4           Such strategic initiatives will contribute to  
5 the Agency's constitutional responsibilities, and also,  
6 Members serve to bolster our long-standing decorated  
7 relationship between our agency here at the Board of  
8 Equalization and our local County Assessors' Offices.

9           This premise is based on the longstanding  
10 reputation that the BOE's Legal team has been regarded  
11 as one of the most premier, experienced and competent  
12 property tax lawyers the Golden State has to offer, and  
13 really throughout the nation.

14           So with the legal team's institutional  
15 knowledge, it serves an incredible wealth of  
16 information, and is often sought after by our local  
17 County Assessors, taxpayers, advocates, the Legislature,  
18 universities and businesses alike.

19           And because of the workload demands that are  
20 upon our legal team, who are working at maximum  
21 capacity, often with limited relief in sight, dealing  
22 with the implementation of Proposition 19,  
23 state-assessed property, the appeals that go along with  
24 that, and also serving the legal needs of the agency  
25 every single day, and administering the multi-billion

1     dollar property tax system, there is a idea that we need  
2     to expand our Legal Department and help where we can.

3             So as a result, the Legal Department's ability  
4     to properly and timely provide legal advice to our  
5     partners at the county level is simply not sustainable.

6             So today the proposal is that we, as a Board,  
7     direct the Executive Director to review this matter, and  
8     provide the Board with the report and analysis on the  
9     value, feasibility, cost of creating a specialized Legal  
10    Unit within the Board of Equalization's Legal Department  
11    to specifically address the needs and challenges that  
12    small and mid-sized County Assessors face.

13            There's a request that this report be back to  
14    the Board in August of 2023.

15            And I want to turn it to our Executive  
16    Director, too. I know you've been helping in this  
17    endeavor. So if you have any comments, that would be  
18    appreciated.

19            Thank you.

20            MR. VAZQUEZ: Let me -- let me start, and then  
21    I'll turn it back.

22            Excuse me. Let me go ahead.

23            First of all, thank you for that proposal, and  
24    thank the Controller.

25            I think it's critical to our oversight

1 responsibilities that we provide detailed and timely  
2 guidance to assessors, the offices we listed in the  
3 Governance Policy, at least eight constitutional and  
4 statutory duties that we owe to the assessors.  
5 Everything from exemptions to change in ownership to tax  
6 rates to the AAB hearings to LTAs and litigation.

7 I support this in concept, but I would like to  
8 defer to our Executive Director to give her input and  
9 see where she sees this all coming together.

10 So let me turn to our Executive Director, and  
11 then we'll open it up to the Members as well.

12 MS. STOWERS: Thank you, Chairman Vazquez.

13 First, I'd like to thank Controller Yee for  
14 bringing this to our attention.

15 MR. VAZQUEZ: Cohen. Member Cohen --  
16 Controller Cohen.

17 MS. STOWERS: I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

18 MR. VAZQUEZ: I know you used to work for  
19 Controller Yee.

20 MS. STOWERS: I'd like to thank -- don't  
21 record that.

22 I would like to thank Controller Cohen for  
23 bringing this to our attention. We are always looking  
24 for feedback on the services that we provide.

25 And although myself and my team are always in

1 contact with the assessors, until Controller's Office  
2 brought this to our attention, this was the first time  
3 that we heard of it.

4 I want to give you some background  
5 information. But before I go into that background, I  
6 want to be clear that I do support the initiative and  
7 the concept of it, and we will have to do some work to  
8 see if it's feasible.

9 And so starting with background, just to kind  
10 of set the stage on our normal course of business.

11 We do provide technical and legal assistance  
12 to all County Assessors and their staff. This is our  
13 responsibility of promoting fair and accurate property  
14 assessment -- assessments throughout the state.

15 This technical assistance is provided through  
16 our Property Tax Department Assessment Services Unit and  
17 our Legal Department.

18 Within the County-Assessed Property Division  
19 of the Property Tax Department there's an Assessment  
20 Service Unit. This unit of experienced property tax  
21 appraisals -- appraisers respond to inquiries from the  
22 assessors, legislative office, taxpayers and  
23 stakeholders as part of their regular work.

24 To date, in the current fiscal year, the  
25 Assessment Services Unit have responded to over 10,300

1 requests for technical advice received from government  
2 entities, the vast majority which are from the  
3 Assessors' Offices.

4 They have also received and responded to 4,000  
5 written inquiries and 6,000 inquiries made by phone.

6 I want to be clear that, you know, we have two  
7 arms of supporting our mission.

8 Then we have our Legal Department. The  
9 Legal Department, our attorneys, they do provide a great  
10 deal of services to everyone, to the Board, rulemaking,  
11 appeals, and legal opinions to the Assessors' Offices.

12 Over the past 12 months, the Legal Department  
13 received 20 legal opinion requests from the County  
14 Assessors' Offices.

15 Requests from the County Assessors are  
16 priority workload for us. The assigned attorney starts  
17 the project immediately upon the County Assessor  
18 contacting the Legal Department, or within 48 hours if  
19 the contact was over the weekend or holiday.

20 However, due to the complexity of the legal  
21 opinions, the need to get additional information from  
22 the assessors, research and review of past advice, the  
23 time to complete such assignments can vary greatly.

24 Generally, most assessors' inquiries are  
25 completed within 90 days, and that includes the time to

1 document the factual background, complete the research  
2 and legal analysis, and come to the conclusion.

3 Our current inventory of requested legal  
4 opinions from County Assessors is seven. The requests  
5 are in various stages of completion, and they are 30 to  
6 60 days old.

7 For the other 13 legal opinions that we  
8 received in the past 12 months, it took 60 to 90 days to  
9 complete.

10 Members, as you can see, the BOE is currently  
11 providing extensive and timely technical and legal  
12 assistance to the 58 County Assessors, whether they're  
13 large, medium, or small, as part of our regular, daily  
14 workload.

15 And I must admit, as I was preparing for this  
16 meeting, I received a couple of e-mails from County  
17 Assessors. Just when -- they do it often. They blind  
18 cc, and just compliment the great work the staff is  
19 doing, and thanking us for our timely and efficient  
20 services. And I'm so grateful that the assessors  
21 provide me with that feedback.

22 But that being said, there's always room for  
23 improvement. And we recognize that. As a matter of  
24 fact, me and my team have already been looking at ways  
25 to make improvements to our services, whether it was in

1 the Property Tax Department or the Legal Department.

2 So I am willing to incorporate the idea of  
3 having a special unit for the County Assessors and the  
4 Legal Department, along with our current valuation on  
5 how to improve our services.

6 I also would like to continue to reach out to  
7 the County Assessors, and the Assessors directly, and  
8 see if we can get more feedback from them on where they  
9 see gaps, if any.

10 Again, support and concept.

11 And, again, thank Controller Cohen for  
12 bringing this topic to our attention.

13 MR. VAZQUEZ: Thank you.

14 Any other comments from any of the other  
15 Members?

16 MR. GAINES: Yes, I would if I could.

17 MR. VAZQUEZ: Member Gaines, go ahead.

18 MR. GAINES: So -- yeah. I want to express  
19 support for this. And I -- I think we're doing a good  
20 job, but I -- I like the prioritization for small and  
21 middle-sized counties. And I'm biased, because I  
22 represent 34 counties, and they're all middle-sized and  
23 small.

24 But, you know, again, as we were talking about  
25 staffing and the struggles of the staff in small

1 counties, the same sort of issues arise when it comes to  
2 legal advice.

3 If I understand what you had said correctly,  
4 did you say that there were seven of the twenty legal  
5 questions --

6 MS. STOWERS: Seven are still outstanding, but  
7 we're working on them.

8 MR. GAINES: Okay.

9 MS. STOWERS: But they're -- they're extremely  
10 complex. You know, they wouldn't ask for a legal  
11 opinion --

12 MR. GAINES: Yes.

13 MS. STOWERS: -- if it was -- so -- but we  
14 are.

15 And the way the team works, and I'm really  
16 proud of this, it's -- it's a shared workload. We're  
17 not relying on just one.

18 MR. GAINES: Yes.

19 MS. STOWERS: We share that workload.

20 And it's really important to share it, because  
21 what did we learn when we had all those retirements in  
22 2018, 2019? All that wealth and knowledge walked out  
23 the door.

24 MR. GAINES: Yeah.

25 MS. STOWERS: And so by sharing the workload,

1 we are constantly training.

2 MR. GAINES: That's good.

3 MS. STOWERS: And it's a good way to grow.

4 MR. GAINES: Yeah. We've had to rebuild the  
5 Legal Department. I mean, it was -- we had a few folks  
6 that helped us at the beginning, and we appreciate that.  
7 But I think we've pretty much gotten up to speed,  
8 haven't we, in terms of staffing?

9 MS. STOWERS: We're -- we're there. There's  
10 always room for improvement.

11 I mean, I'm not going to say that it's  
12 100 percent, but it's pretty good. I'm -- I'm proud of  
13 them. I'm very proud of them. And I -- I'm proud of  
14 the collaboration that they do.

15 MR. GAINES: Okay. Thank you.

16 MS. STOWERS: And how they reach out to each  
17 other, how they cross review each other's work, and how  
18 they're in constant communication with the Assessors.

19 MR. GAINES: Wonderful.

20 MS. STOWERS: Yeah.

21 MR. GAINES: Yeah. So I -- I'll be awaiting a  
22 review on your part. And I think then it comes back to  
23 the Board, doesn't it?

24 MR. VAZQUEZ: Yes.

25 MR. GAINES: Wonderful. Thank you.

1                   MR. VAZQUEZ: Vice Chair Lieber, and then  
2 we'll go to Member Schaefer.

3                   MS. LIEBER: Thank you.

4                   In reviewing this item, I've been really  
5 struck by the experience that I've had in meeting with  
6 my Assessors. And a large part of my district is also  
7 rural and counties that are really not staffed up to  
8 deal with complex matters. And all of them have been  
9 able to name specific BOE staff that they love working  
10 with.

11                  So I think right now there's a good level of  
12 interconnectivity. And the Assessors that I've met with  
13 feel like they're very well served, and were able to  
14 name specific staff members who had gone above and  
15 beyond to do specific things for them.

16                  I -- I am a little bit concerned about the  
17 scope of our decisionmaking, and how it interacts with  
18 AB 102 and our ability to direct particular staffing in  
19 particular areas.

20                  And -- and I think part of that is what's, you  
21 know, owned by the Legislature to determine when there  
22 should be additional staffing, and -- and new functions  
23 created. So that's kind of the -- the thoughts that I  
24 have right now.

25                  I -- I very much appreciate the --- the memo

1     that we were given this morning. And I'd like to have  
2     some time to absorb that, and -- and really understand  
3     the impact that this would, with this type of a  
4     proposal, supplant staffing that the county would  
5     otherwise engage in.

6             And -- and how mechanically would this work?  
7     Since we're actually clearing the cases that we have  
8     right now. It sounds like there's a large volume of  
9     cases coming in the door, and they're all being cleared.

10            So I -- I'd like to have some more time to  
11     digest what has been proposed, and how it interacts with  
12     our -- our portfolio of actions that we can take.

13            MR. VAZQUEZ: Thank you.

14            Member Schaefer, go ahead.

15            MR. SCHAEFER: Thank you.

16            I have some, both procedural and substantive  
17     issues.

18            First of all, on my docket I noticed that  
19     Item 8 is all in black, and Items 6, 7 and 9 are in  
20     blue.

21            Can you tell me the significance of that?  
22     Does it have anything to do with the State Controller's  
23     ability to vote on it?

24            I don't think so, because we use CF to tell us  
25     that.

1           Why are some of the headlines, in fact, all of  
2   them in blue, but this one is in black?

3           MS. STOWERS:  If -- if anything's in blue,  
4   that means it's linked to the internet.  If you see blue  
5   font, if you click on that, you would get to the source  
6   document.  There's a link there.  Blue indicates a link  
7   to the website.

8           MR. SCHAEFER:  I see.

9           MS. STOWERS:  It's a memorandum.

10          MR. SCHAEFER:  And the black, there is no  
11   link.

12          MS. STOWERS:  That means that the memorandum  
13   was not available at the time.

14          MR. SCHAEFER:  And then I have one other  
15   question.

16          The Schaefer memorandum, which is the next  
17   item, is -- is two pages, all done on one page.  And  
18   Ms. Cohen's memorandum here is three pages, could all be  
19   done on one page if you just use front and back.

20          MS. STOWERS:  Well, I think that's -- first of  
21   all, I think we're not talking about your item yet.  But  
22   I think Controller Cohen's memo, it's up to the author  
23   of the memo on whether they want something to be two  
24   pages or four pages.  They have that ability.

25          MR. SCHAEFER:  Well, Vice Chair Lieber has

1     accused me of being frugal, and maybe I am. I would  
2     like to see us use front and back whenever possible,  
3     whatever comes into us. And we should be trained to  
4     look on the front page and the back page of whatever  
5     page we're turning. Just think how much we could save  
6     over time.

7             MS. STOWERS: Yeah. Okay. Duly noted.

8             MR. SCHAEFER: All right. Thank you.

9             And I -- I applaud Ms. Cohen for bringing us  
10    so many well thought out ideas, and makes our -- our  
11    service to the public of better quality.

12            But on something here about dealing with the  
13    Legal Department, I would expect our Chief Counsel to  
14    maybe be the leading ore in -- in such an idea like  
15    this, because he knows better than we do, what's legal  
16    and what isn't legal.

17            And this may be more administrative than  
18    legal. And if it's more administrative than legal, and  
19    we don't have a lawsuit involved, we're just trying to  
20    do a better job of administering, we might be able to do  
21    it with less costly people.

22            Because I know whenever you get legal people,  
23    they're the most costly people on the payroll. And I  
24    want to be sure that we're not billable hours, you know,  
25    over -- overstaffing. We have a lot of great people

1     that are not legal, and I'm a little intimidated by this  
2     being strictly a Legal Department function.

3             Thank you.

4             MS. STOWERS: Thank you for your comments,  
5     Member Schaefer.

6             MR. VAZQUEZ: Well, thank you.

7             In listening to the comments -- oh, Member --  
8     Control -- Deputy Controller, go ahead.

9             MR. EMRAN: Thank you, Chairman.

10            And well-noted, Member Schaefer. I'll  
11     continue to work with the Controller on the layout of  
12     these memos.

13            Essentially, I believe that the Board is in a  
14     leadership position to help small and mid-sized County  
15     Assessors. Oftentimes these offices or -- and these  
16     counties, they believe they're in the shadows. They're  
17     in the shadows, and they're not as well-resourced as the  
18     larger counties, the more wealthier counties.

19            So I do believe this is an opportunity for the  
20     Board to show that leadership. And in this memo, it's a  
21     recommendation for a report back on the feasibility, the  
22     cost, and everything, so forth.

23            So with that, I think it's a great opportunity  
24     here. And I'm looking forward to working with the  
25     Executive Director on and -- and hearing that report in

1 August to see what the best steps are moving forward.

2 So thank you.

3 I yield back.

4 MR. VAZQUEZ: Thank you.

5 Oh, yeah. Go ahead.

6 MS. STOWERS: May I comment?

7 I do recognize that you guys just got the memo  
8 today, and you probably haven't had an opportunity to  
9 really get a good understanding of what Controller Cohen  
10 is trying to accomplish.

11 May I suggest that instead of taking a vote  
12 today, we table it, provide your office an opportunity  
13 to review, and we put it back on the agenda for July?

14 MR. VAZQUEZ: I'm comfortable with that.

15 It sounds like from hearing from my Members  
16 that they're, you know, that's probably the best move at  
17 this point.

18 And I -- and I kind of feel that the  
19 Deputy Controller was kind of hitting that way. I know  
20 he wanted to move this as quick as possible, and I guess  
21 you may rest assured that we'll definitely take it up.

22 And it looks like there's obviously interest  
23 from all of us, including the Executive Director. I  
24 think they're just trying to figure out how it all fits  
25 into our duties and responsibilities.

1           MR. EMRAN: I completely understand, Chairman.

2           I would urge a vote today. Because it is  
3 something of a pressing need. Time is of the essence  
4 here, and, essentially, it's a report back.

5           I'm not asking for -- to hire their attorneys  
6 tomorrow or the day after. But have the Executive  
7 Director, in 60 days, come report back on what the cost  
8 of this would be, the feasibility, the value of it, the  
9 value add. And at that point in August, we can all  
10 decide as a Board the best path forward.

11           So I do -- would urge a vote today on behalf  
12 of the Controller. I think she would like to see this  
13 proposal accepted today, if -- if the Board Members have  
14 the appetite for it.

15           Thank you.

16           MR. VAZQUEZ: Vice Chair Lieber.

17           MS. LIEBER: Well, I think that if we bring it  
18 back in -- in July, and we're able to get a better sense  
19 of it, and -- and part of an answer.

20           And, in particular, for me, the jurisdictional  
21 questions are really essential. Then that's actually  
22 quicker than August. And -- and I think if I don't have  
23 the jurisdictional answers -- questions answered, then  
24 I'm not really comfortable with going there, as laudable  
25 as it is, I think.

1                   And -- and then I don't really understand,  
2   well, where exactly do we need the staffing? If the  
3   legal answers are being processed expeditiously, would  
4   it -- would we rather need a person that would be a  
5   connector, that would go out to all of the small and  
6   medium counties and talk to them about their needs? Or  
7   -- or would we put the money into more staffing in terms  
8   of the veterans groups understanding what they can  
9   access, and etc.?

10                  So I -- I just -- I can't really give an  
11   answer today if I'm in favor of a specialized unit. But  
12   I -- I would like to have some of the questions  
13   answered.

14                  MR. VAZQUEZ: Thank you.

15                  Member Gaines, and then I think Deputy  
16   Controller wanted to weigh in as well.

17                  Go ahead.

18                  MR. GAINES: I think Vice Chair Lieber raises  
19   a good question. We want to make sure that we're living  
20   within the spirit of AB 102. So I would -- would like  
21   that clarified.

22                  My -- my view on it was that we were asking  
23   for the Executive Director to report back to us, and  
24   then we could make a decision. But I think at the same  
25   time we've got to be careful.

1           Because we -- we hire you as an Executive  
2     Director, okay. And so your job is to run the agency.  
3     Now, if we're unhappy with that, then we can make a  
4     decision as to whether that's the right Executive  
5     Director or not.

6           So I think I would be in support of waiting  
7     another month on this. And let's get all the questions  
8     answered, and then we could bring it up in our next  
9     agenda. It doesn't have to be more than a month.

10          And I -- at the same time, I want to support  
11     what Controller Cohen's coming forward with, but I'd  
12     rather have -- not have questions, and see if we could  
13     do something that would be unanimous, then potentially a  
14     split vote here.

15          MR. EMRAN: Understood, Senator. I appreciate  
16     you bringing those comments forward.

17          Executive Director, if we bring this back in  
18     July, are you still comfortable with that August report  
19     back, that it will be shortened to 30 days, rather than  
20     giving you a full 60?

21          MS. STOWERS: Yes.

22          MR. EMRAN: Okay. Thank you.

23          MR. VAZQUEZ: Thank you.

24          It sounds like we have a consensus here. Why  
25     don't we just do that?

1           Thank you, and thank you to Member -- our  
2   Controller for bringing this forward.

3           And with that, Ms. Cichetti --

4           MS. CICHETTI:  Chair Vazquez, we do have  
5   someone on the line who wanted --

6           MR. VAZQUEZ:  Oh, we do.

7           MS. CICHETTI:  -- to make a comment on this  
8   item.

9           MR. VAZQUEZ:  Sure.

10          MS. CICHETTI:  I believe it's Christine Lee.  
11   She's the president of CAA.

12          MR. VAZQUEZ:  Sure.

13          MS. CICHETTI:  And since we're not taking a  
14   vote, we wouldn't go out, but she is here.

15          So, Ms. Lee.

16          MS. LEE:  Can you hear me?

17          MR. VAZQUEZ:  Yes.

18          MS. LEE:  Hi.  Good morning, Chairman and  
19   Members of the Board.

20          Christine Lee.  I am the President of the  
21   California Assessors' Association.  But here today I am  
22   speaking on behalf of Kings County as the Assessor.

23          This item recently came to my attention, so I  
24   have not taken it to the Assessors' Association and  
25   received their opinions on it.

1           But I did want to add just a couple of  
2    comments that, you know, in general -- well, my office  
3    is a small-to-medium-sized county, and we have 153,000  
4    population, and about 50,000 parcels.

5           And so of course my staff does answer all the  
6    general questions, and we try to vet as much as we can.  
7    When something comes up that's technical or requires a  
8    legal interpretation, we do seek counsel from our  
9    internal lawyers that are, you know, with the -- with  
10   the county, the county counsel's office.

11           But the problem is, especially in the small  
12   counties, those attorneys are all spread so thin over  
13   all the different departments. And so they don't have  
14   any expertise in property assessment or property  
15   taxation.

16           So getting answers from them, well, it just is  
17   what it is. They don't have that expertise, and this  
18   isn't something they deal with routinely. It's -- it's  
19   not often that we have the questions, but they do arise.

20           And so we do tend to rely on the State  
21   Board of Equalization's Legal team's expertise when it  
22   is something that's complicated or, you know, requires  
23   more than just basic law interpretation.

24           So I -- I realize it's difficult with the  
25   Board of Equalization's Legal team also when they are

1 spread thin and have a lot of us asking questions, but I  
2 would ensure that it's just the most critical questions  
3 that would be sent their way.

4 And, you know, this is serving our  
5 constituents in the best possible manner by making sure  
6 that we are having consistent treatments of technical  
7 issues throughout the state, rather than, you know,  
8 relying on our own interpretations, our -- our  
9 inexperienced county counsel's interpretation maybe of  
10 certain areas that are more commonly heard at the Board  
11 of Equalization level.

12 And so I appreciate Controller Cohen's  
13 willingness to put forth the recommendation to look into  
14 the feasibility of this proposal.

15 Thank you very much.

16 MR. VAZQUEZ: Thank you for your comments.

17 Was there anybody else on the line that we  
18 have?

19 I believe -- are you -- you still on the line?

20 MS. LEE: Yes, I am.

21 MR. VAZQUEZ: Member Gaines, I think, has a  
22 question or comment.

23 MR. GAINES: Yeah.

24 Thank you for your comments, Christine.

25 I'm wondering, by the time we have our next

1 meeting, would this be reviewed by the California  
2 Assessors' Association? Would we have more information  
3 from the body?

4 MS. LEE: The next scheduled meeting is  
5 actually in August of the California Assessors'  
6 Association. But I could send out an e-mail to the  
7 members and see what feedback we get that way.

8 MR. GAINES: Okay. That would be helpful, at  
9 least for me, I think for the whole Board in terms of  
10 getting a temperature from them.

11 So thank you, Assessor Lee. I appreciate it.

12 MS. LEE: Thank you.

13 MR. VAZQUEZ: Thank you.

14 There wasn't anybody else on the line, was  
15 there?

16 MS. CICHETTI: I could go out to the AT&T  
17 Moderator if you'd like.

18 MR. VAZQUEZ: Sure.

19 MS. CICHETTI: AT&T moderator, is there anyone  
20 on the line who'd like to make a public comment  
21 regarding this item?

22 AT&T MODERATOR: Thank you.

23 If you'd like to make a public comment  
24 regarding this item, please press one, followed by the  
25 zero at this time.



1 And our Executive Director, Ms. Stowers, is forward.

2 MR. SCHAEFER: Thank you.

3 In the five years that I've been sitting on  
4 this Board, the input of our Members has always been of  
5 great interest to me. There's been no limitations on  
6 it, and we've had quite a variety of topics. Most of  
7 them are -- our topics are related directly to the work  
8 of our mission, and that's appropriate.

9 I do find that sometimes we expand our vision  
10 beyond our mission, and I am appalled to see that some  
11 of the items, which I'm used to being 10 or 15-minute  
12 items on the rest of the agenda, when we get to Member  
13 items, they can run to an hour or more. And in our  
14 meeting last month, we had an item or two that ran for  
15 an hour or more.

16 I think we have to sit back and take a look at  
17 just what we're going to allow to be put into the  
18 Members' section. I think it'd be very healthy if we'd  
19 have a object of trying to look for, say, a 20-minute  
20 limitation on whatever we're going to be presenting.  
21 Do not exceed 20 minutes, regardless of how many people  
22 are involved in it. That means instead of 10 speakers,  
23 we might try to have one or two, if any.

24 I'd also like to respect each Member's right  
25 to maybe veto getting into a topic, if that Member, him

1 or her, has a strong view that maybe this is a topic we  
2 should not be getting into. I think we should respect  
3 each other's view on that, and give us the veto power on  
4 it, is one of my proposals.

5 And I would like you to just look at our --  
6 our mission, which is to serve California through fair,  
7 effective, and efficient tax administration in support  
8 of state and local governments.

9 I think if we view all of our presentations  
10 through a filter like that, we will have maybe fewer  
11 items, and maybe the more meaningful items. And with  
12 all of us having an agenda that, because we're elected  
13 officials, that is really much larger than the Board of  
14 Equalization, we are tempted to want to just discuss  
15 whatever's on our mind with our Members.

16 I would suggest maybe the place to discuss  
17 some of these broader issues is a letter to the editor,  
18 or op-ed article in a local paper. And when I mentioned  
19 that, I'd like to insist that whenever any Member has a  
20 letter to the editor relating to our work or an op-ed,  
21 we don't want to miss it. And I would ask that that  
22 Member send a copy to our Executive Director who would  
23 share it with each one of us, so we know what's being  
24 said.

25 I had a letter published a couple weeks ago in

1 the Los Angeles Times, and I sent a letter to each of my  
2 colleagues that wasn't really related to our work, but  
3 it might be interesting. It dealt strictly with the  
4 issue of age of some of our elected officials, and how  
5 they can be as effective older than younger. And, you  
6 know, that's a big issue nationally with the President  
7 of the United States and in California, and with myself.  
8 I wouldn't want to miss any Pearls of Wisdom that any of  
9 my colleagues would have in a public forum.

10 And Ms. Stowers should be aware of my concern  
11 there, and if she learns of anything that any of us are  
12 quoted in public, share it with us. I think it makes us  
13 stronger Members and more educated Members.

14 And so while I applaud the Member input, I'm  
15 glad that we have it. I don't want it to be abused.  
16 Not that it has been abused in the past, but the  
17 possibility is there. And when we spend an hour or more  
18 talking on some subject, when really we would like to  
19 resolve anything within 15 minutes to a half hour, if we  
20 could, I think somebody has to speak up.

21 And I have a reputation for being a cage  
22 rattler, and that's what I'm doing today. And forgive  
23 me, Father, for I have sinned. But I have not. I think  
24 I'm bringing forward something that is intelligent, and  
25 each of us should respect it, as I respect the great

1 work each of you are doing.

2 And when we see something that runs to a  
3 little excess, I think we have a right to do a shout out  
4 on it. Because I think that makes us better and  
5 stronger.

6 Since I've asked you to share your opinions  
7 with me, if you might want to continue this over until  
8 next month and invite any Member to send me a little  
9 memo, or the first two Members, I don't want to violate  
10 Bagley-Keene, because the three of us can't talk to each  
11 other.

12 The first two of you that -- or the first one  
13 of you that might send me something, I would file a  
14 little amendment to it, so that we could all have the  
15 benefit of the conversation.

16 I think it's important that we have dialogues,  
17 whatever we can. And I just feel that nobody has ever  
18 spoken out before on the Members' section of our docket,  
19 and that's what I'm doing. And you should thank me for  
20 it.

21 Thank you.

22 MS. STOWERS: May I?

23 MR. VAZQUEZ: Sure. Go ahead.

24 Executive Director.

25 MS. STOWERS: I will be brief.

1           As this issue or issues pertains to the  
2   Board's Governance Policy that was adopted January 2021  
3   and amended November 2nd, 2022, it's really up to the  
4   Board to decide on this matter.

5           However, Mr. Nanjo is available to answer any  
6   legal questions that the Board may have.

7           MR. VAZQUEZ: Thank you.

8           Member Gaines.

9           MR. GAINES: I want to thank Member Schaefer  
10   for bringing this forward.

11           I think maybe the right approach is to take a  
12   look at our Governance Policy and -- and see if we need  
13   to make any adjustments.

14           But I've always been of the understanding that  
15   issues that we bring forward to this Board are falling  
16   within the realm of our duties as Members of the BOE.  
17   And so I'd love to hear our -- our Legal counsel with  
18   respect to that.

19           In terms of the time issue, I really don't  
20   have an issue with time on -- certainly when it comes to  
21   testimony from the public and interested parties. I  
22   think that's valuable.

23           As elected officials in other positions, we  
24   understand how long it can take to get through public  
25   testimony. Sometimes hours late into the night. But

1 I -- I kind of -- my view is I see that as part of our  
2 duty.

3 And I -- I would want to make sure that we are  
4 being comprehensive in these hearings. So if we have a  
5 hearing, I want to make sure that we're hearing from  
6 every party. And I know that that -- I really feel like  
7 that's our responsibility.

8 But, you know, sometimes, maybe some of that  
9 testimony is -- it might be boring, but we're called to  
10 do that as elected.

11 So that's just my -- my perspective. And if  
12 you, Member Schaefer, you think things are going too  
13 long on any particular issue, you've got the right and  
14 the ability to bring that up in future hearings.

15 But I -- I guess I -- this is one situation  
16 where I'd rather see more than less when it comes to  
17 public input.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. VAZQUEZ: Thank you.

20 I agree with that. You know, I mean, having  
21 sat on a city council in Santa Monica, we were lucky to  
22 finish our meetings by 2 a.m. So I welcome what we do  
23 here. So even if we go sometimes 7, 8 hours, to me,  
24 that's half the day, you know. You know, I'm used to  
25 long days.

1           And at the end of the day, you're right, it  
2   could be very tedious and long. But, I mean, as elected  
3   officials, I think that's our role and responsibility.  
4   We can't cut off the public. I mean, if people want to  
5   testify, they're more than welcome to testify.

6           I mean, I would love to see this place packed  
7   with folks. I think one of the things that was positive  
8   about COVID is that when we've had -- we did these  
9   hearings, I mean, a couple of those housing hearings, we  
10   had like 1,000 people on the line. And it was because  
11   they didn't have to fly up to Sacramento. And, you  
12   know, there's something to be said about that.

13          And I think we mentioned that -- that, you  
14   know, even running kind of like a hybrid system makes  
15   sense moving forward.

16          But -- and, you know, in regards to the items,  
17   I guess, that was listed on this particular item, 8 and  
18   9, I know we ran this by Legal, and if it was something  
19   that was out of the norm or out of our responsibility,  
20   it wouldn't have been agendized.

21          And I know talking to my Vice Chair, you know,  
22   we checked that before, and with our Exec Director and  
23   Legal team. And I don't know if Mr. Nanjo wants to  
24   weigh in on this at this point. But --

25          MR. NANJO: Sure. I'm --

1           MR. VAZQUEZ: I'm comfortable the way we're  
2 moving. And if anything, maybe just, you know, we could  
3 agendize the governance at our next meeting, and see --  
4 give the opportunity for folks if they want to make  
5 suggestions.

6           I know I've heard from my Vice Chair that  
7 there might be some things she might want to recommend  
8 and tweak. And it may make sense. You know, it is a  
9 living and a live document that, you know, at any time,  
10 we can make changes to it.

11          MR. NANJO: So, Chairman Vazquez, Vice Chair  
12 Lieber, Members of the Board, thank you very much.

13          Henry Nanjo, Chief Counsel here.

14          A number of issues were brought up, so I will  
15 try to address as many of them as I can remember.

16          First item is, you are correct, Chairman  
17 Vazquez, the Governance Policy is a policy of the Board  
18 Members. It's your living document.

19          You have put in place a process by which the  
20 Governance Policy is reviewed annually. Typically, we  
21 do that either at the November meeting or the December  
22 meeting to take effect in January, but nothing stops you  
23 from reviewing it in any time.

24          So I would invite the Members to review the  
25 Governance Policy, and if you think there are

1 significant changes that should be done earlier, you can  
2 always ask for that to be agendized, and that can be  
3 taken care of in that manner.

4 As far as the process for agenda items, as you  
5 may remember, the Board also has discussed a process for  
6 putting agenda items on the docket, if you will, or the  
7 agenda. This was a Board Member requested item.

8 And I can tell you as Chief Counsel, I do  
9 review it for legality. What I'm looking for in Board  
10 Member requested items is whether there's any illegality  
11 in the item.

12 But generally speaking, I provide -- or I try  
13 to exercise a great deal of latitude for the Board  
14 Members. Because in your jobs as elected officials, you  
15 have many functions. Communications to the public,  
16 communications to the taxpayers, education. And it  
17 makes sense that in some cases you may want to get  
18 background in some additional or adjacent areas that may  
19 be related. You may be providing that information for  
20 your constituents through the Board Meeting and  
21 presentations.

22 So generally speaking, unless there's  
23 something that's illegal, I -- which I will definitely  
24 bring to the attention of anybody who's proposing an  
25 agenda item, I try to exercise latitude. Because I know

1     there are all these other things going on as well for  
2     the Board Members.

3             You know, a lot of -- a lot of the items that  
4     the Board Members do, and Board Member requested items  
5     are to provide context to some of the decisions you're  
6     making, some of the issues that you may be facing, and  
7     generally providing background for the public, which I  
8     think is an important factor as well.

9             So that's why I try to exercise as much  
10    latitude as possible. Of course, if there's anything  
11    illegal, I will definitely call the Board Members out,  
12    or advise you about that, I should say. Didn't mean it  
13    quite that way.

14            But -- so at this point as to the items that  
15    occurred in May, they were in that category of  
16    background, contextual information, and what have you.

17            So thank you, Chairman.

18            MR. SCHAEFER: Thank you, Mr. Nanjo.

19            You -- it wouldn't have to rise to the level  
20    of illegality for you to advise the Member or Members.  
21    It could rise to the level of excess or impracticality,  
22    but not illegality. I -- I wanted to know that -- I  
23    want you to tell me that you'll go beyond illegality and  
24    advise the Members whenever it'd be helpful.

25            MR. NANJO: As -- as the Board Members know, I

1     tend to be very candid with you. So I will definitely  
2     let you know of any concerns I may have, whether it's --  
3     even if it does not rise to the level of illegality.

4             So I am -- I am not shy about providing  
5     feedback. But ultimately it's the decision of the Board  
6     and the Chairman as to which agenda items are -- are put  
7     on the agenda.

8             And once the agenda items are called, I think  
9     Member Gaines brought up an excellent point, which is  
10    you, as Board Members, are free to say, you know, I  
11    think I've gone -- we've gone too long on this, or what  
12    have you, and -- and have a dialogue about the agenda  
13    item. That's fully within your rights as well.

14            So I think --

15            MR. SCHAEFER: I appreciate the quality of  
16    your input, and the speediness of it. I write to you,  
17    and I get something back within 24 to 48 hours. And  
18    that's amazing. Some other parts of government, you  
19    know, take a week or two, or some I'm still waiting for.

20            Thank you.

21            MR. NANJO: Absolutely.

22            My pleasure, Member Schaefer. I try to be  
23    very responsive to all the Board Members, and also  
24    County Assessors.

25            I invite the County Assessors, if they have an

1 issue, to contact me directly. Let me know about any  
2 legal opinions they need, and -- and what have you. And  
3 we try very hard to provide excellent service, because  
4 that's what we do.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. VAZQUEZ: Thank you. I appreciate it.

7 With that, I think my Vice Chair wants to  
8 talk.

9 MS. LIEBER: Yes, thank you.

10 Well, I very much appreciate the  
11 Member-initiated items that we've had recently. And I  
12 think they are very congruent with our -- our  
13 constitutional duties.

14 And the sense of hearing the presentations  
15 about the veterans' exemptions, and homeownership  
16 affordability within our state, that's really part and  
17 parcel of what we do. Not to make an incredibly bad pun  
18 there.

19 And I'm also mindful that the Board Member  
20 matters that are on policy have not required a lot of  
21 our professional staff's time. We tend to spend more  
22 professional staff time on the procedural kinds of  
23 questions.

24 And I would like to see an item come back to  
25 us where we would have a gatekeeping function, where at

1     least two Members of the Board would need to request an  
2     item coming forward to us.

3             That, on other boards and city council, etc.,  
4     that I've been on, you know, you have to have a vote and  
5     have a majority of members approve it. And I think that  
6     if we have two Members requesting the item, then we will  
7     not get into a Bagley-Keene problem, which is of the  
8     highest importance to me.

9             We have to always, in every single thing that  
10    we do, be absolutely completely transparent. And so I  
11    would be very much in favor of seeing that kind of a  
12    gatekeeping mechanism come back to us.

13            I do want to ensure that we keep the Board  
14    Member matters where they are on the agenda, so that  
15    there's the maximum amount of participation. And that  
16    we keep the reports towards the end of the agenda.

17            But maybe there could be a small item at the  
18    end of every agenda where a Board Member could say, "I'd  
19    really like to have a report on X, Y or Z," and be able  
20    to see if -- and there should be one other colleague  
21    that agrees that it's a matter that should end up on the  
22    agenda.

23            And I think that'll help to make these the  
24    most effective meetings, and the effective use of staff  
25    and work possible.

1                   So that's -- that's my contribution to this.

2                   MR. VAZQUEZ: Thank you.

3                   So well noted. I'll sit with my Vice Chair,  
4                   and we'll hopefully address -- be able to address this  
5                   at our next meeting, probably through the governance.  
6                   It makes probably the most sense.

7                   Unless my Executive Director thinks there's  
8                   other vehicles.

9                   MS. STOWERS: Let me consult with Mr. Nanjo.

10                  I think as far as the two Members agreeing to  
11                  bring something forward might require amendment to your  
12                  Governance Policy.

13                  MR. VAZQUEZ: That's what I'm thinking.

14                  MS. STOWERS: Yeah.

15                  MR. VAZQUEZ: That's what I'm thinking.

16                  Let's -- we'll bring it back and see if  
17                  there's a consensus.

18                  MR. NANJO: Yeah.

19                  And just -- just to remind the Board Members,  
20                  currently your process is that agenda items go to the  
21                  Chairman, you know, then it's shared with the Executive  
22                  Director, who shares it with me.

23                  And then if for some reason the Chairman  
24                  declines a Board Member-requested item, then any Board  
25                  Member can bring that up at -- toward the end of the

1 agenda as an administrative matter. Even though it's  
2 not agendized, they can just say, "I'd like to see on  
3 my -- on the next agenda X. I proposed it to the  
4 Chairman, but, you know, it was declined."

5 And then you could have a dialogue about that.  
6 That is appropriate, as long as you don't discuss the  
7 substance of what is in that, even though it's not  
8 agendized.

9 So that is your kind of fallback process that  
10 you already have.

11 That being said, Executive Director Stowers is  
12 absolutely correct. You can make whatever changes to  
13 your Governance Policy you want.

14 And I'm reminded by my staff that the  
15 illegality standard that I'm exercising is not my  
16 creation. That was actually something the  
17 Board Members put in the Governance Policy. So that is  
18 your policy I am acting forward on. So --

19 MR. VAZQUEZ: Thank you.

20 Vice Chair Lieber, I think, has a question.

21 MS. LIEBER: Well, if I -- if I might, over  
22 the time between now and the next meeting, if we could  
23 speak about kind of how we clarify that process that  
24 currently exists.

25 MR. NANJO: Sure.

1 MS. LIEBER: So that items are submitted to  
2 our Chair. If -- if they're declined, then they would  
3 go through that process that already exists.

4 And I think if we make good use of that a bit  
5 more, and that -- that would be the best thing.

6 MR. NANJO: Absolutely.

7 MS. STOWERS: We'll give you some time -- with  
8 you to go over it.

9 MR. NANJO: Yeah. With your permission, the  
10 Executive Director and I can work with your office and  
11 kind of come up with something that we -- you or we  
12 would be comfortable proposing to the Board at the next  
13 meeting.

14 MS. LIEBER: Okay. Thank you.

15 MR. VAZQUEZ: Our Deputy Controller, I think,  
16 wanted to weigh in.

17 MR. EMRAN: Yes. Thank you, Chairman.

18 I want to thank the spirited discussion today  
19 on this item.

20 Number one, I believe that as leaders of the  
21 state, we have accountability to the public to hear  
22 them, to see them, to help them, and solve some of the  
23 most pressing issues that are facing California today,  
24 whether it be the housing crisis, the homelessness  
25 crisis, which is linked to the housing crisis, the

1 wildfires that are plaguing the state with wildfire  
2 season starting, charring homes.

3 And then just my second point would be in  
4 regards to the -- to the items that have been brought up  
5 so far this past year. I believe they've all been so  
6 helpful and informative, and just kind of gaining  
7 knowledge. And I applaud the Chairman and his office  
8 for making it so informative for myself included.

9 I just had one question in regards to the  
10 Governance Policy, do we do an annual or biannual review  
11 of that policy?

12 MR. VAZQUEZ: It's open. I mean, we -- we did  
13 at the very beginning, because we were all new. But  
14 since then, it's -- it's pretty much open to whenever we  
15 want to agendize it.

16 MS. STOWERS: Actually -- excuse me, sir.

17 It is whenever you want to agendize it --

18 MR. VAZQUEZ: Right.

19 MS. STOWERS: But you -- in your -- it's in  
20 your policy, you guys did ask for it to be viewed every  
21 year.

22 MR. NANJO: In -- in, like I said, in November  
23 or December.

24 MR. VAZQUEZ: It's usually the end of the  
25 year.

1                   MR. EMRAN:   Okay.   Got it.

2                   MR. NANJO:   With the idea --

3                   MR. VAZQUEZ:   But there's nothing set in  
4   stone, I mean.

5                   MS. STOWERS:   Yes, nothing set in stone.   It's  
6   a living document.   And I think, actually, we did -- I  
7   know we did it in December.

8                   MR. VAZQUEZ:   We did.   Because there was some  
9   confusion on the election.

10                  MS. STOWERS:   There was some confusion.   And  
11   then we actually -- we being me, wanted to do it in  
12   January, because I knew that we was having a new Member  
13   coming on board.

14                  MR. VAZQUEZ:   Exactly.

15                  MS. STOWERS:   So it's -- and even you, you're  
16   kind of new.

17                  MR. EMRAN:   Yeah.   Thank you.

18                  MS. STOWERS:   So it might be time to consider  
19   putting that on the agenda.   I don't know if it's July  
20   or August is the best time.   We'll have to check with  
21   Ms. Taylor and see what --

22                  MR. VAZQUEZ:   We could look and see and check  
23   with management.

24                  MS. STOWERS:   Yeah.   That calendar is getting  
25   pretty full, but let's -- let's work on it.

1           MR. EMRAN: Yeah, I would -- I would really  
2 appreciate that. I think having a biannual review of  
3 the Governance Policy, we're halfway through the year,  
4 believe it or not. And even if it's on the agenda in a  
5 quick discussion, or just to check off, I think would be  
6 helpful just for us to continuously be improving all the  
7 process and procedures of the Board.

8           So I'm all for that, thank you.

9           MR. NANJO: Yeah.

10           And just as a reminder to the Board, I believe  
11 the reason the Board originally selected  
12 November/December timeframe was they just wanted to make  
13 sure any changes to the Governance Policy went into  
14 effect with a new Chairman or a new Vice Chairman, as  
15 the case may be. So -- yeah.

16           MR. VAZQUEZ: Member Schaefer, go ahead.

17           MR. SCHAEFER: Yes. I'm -- you know, this  
18 entire Board, with the four elected officials we have  
19 here, come with decades of experience in prior  
20 Government.

21           Ms. Lieber and Mr. Gaines have both been in  
22 the State Legislature for years and served with honor  
23 and respect.

24           The Chair and I have been leaders of major  
25 city governments, and we learn of rules and ideas and

1       ways they do business, so we can bring to this Board.

2       And I think that's a great thing.

3               I want you to know that we do cut off free  
4       speech, because we have a three-minute limit sometimes.  
5       So we know we got six people want to speak in a deal,  
6       you each can have three minutes or five minutes.

7               I mean, if evangelist comes in and wants to  
8       spend an hour lecturing to us why we are sinning with  
9       what we're talking about, we can reduce that to five  
10      minutes. I mean, that's -- the Chair has that  
11      prerogative, and all he needs is a support of the  
12      majority of his Board, which he -- it would be a given.

13              I want you to know that all the growling that  
14      I'm doing today was not as to our whole agenda, our  
15      whole life. I'm limited down to the Member, the  
16      Board Member requested items.

17              So I think the Board Member requested items,  
18      we could possibly say the -- the public, you know,  
19      you're going to have to stand down for a minute, this is  
20      something that just we guys and gals are going to talk  
21      about.

22              When we get through with that Board Member  
23      requested item, then everybody can speak forever on it.  
24      They're two different concepts.

25              So I want you to know that my unhappiness is

1 just with a very limited part, and it's just limiting it  
2 to what I would call common sense.

3 And I do appreciate the input from each of you  
4 today, and I -- I do know we have some history in having  
5 some limited limitation on what we received from the  
6 public. But I agree, as Senator Gaines does, that our  
7 mission is to be transparent, and let everybody have  
8 their say. But we also have to do it in common sense.

9 I've seen city councils sit up all night long  
10 till 2:00 or 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning to let  
11 everybody have a piece. But that's not as to the Board  
12 Member requested items. That's our own little  
13 protected -- our own little gig. Okay?

14 Thank you.

15 MR. VAZQUEZ: Thank you.

16 MR. NANJO: Thank you, Member Schaefer.

17 If I can just make sure that we are all on the  
18 same page. My understanding is the Executive Director,  
19 in consultation with myself, will be talking with Vice  
20 Chair Lieber for possible modifications or proposed  
21 modifications to the Governance Policy that will be  
22 brought back to the Board where all the Board Members  
23 can weigh in.

24 At that time, obviously, you're free to add or  
25 subtract any changes you have, and we'll -- we'll take

1 another robust look at our governance -- or your  
2 Governance Policy.

3 MR. SCHAEFER: That's a good idea.

4 MR. VAZQUEZ: Appreciate it. Thank you.

5 MR. NANJO: Thank you.

6 MR. VAZQUEZ: And thank you all.

7 With that, Ms. Cichetti, we'll move on to our  
8 next item.

9 (Whereupon the item concluded.)

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Dated: February 29, 2024

*Jillian Sumner*

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JILLIAN SUMNER, CSR #13619

Hearing Reporter