

Department of Planning and Budget

2021 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: SB1271

House of Origin	☒	Introduced	☐	Substitute	☐	Engrossed
Second House	☐	In Committee	☐	Substitute	☐	Enrolled

2. Patron: McPike

3. Committee: General Laws and Technology

4. Title: Virginia Freedom of Information Act; meetings held through electronic communication means.

5. Summary: Allows a public body, or a joint meeting thereof, to meet by electronic communication means without a quorum of the public body physically assembled at one location when a locality in which the public body is located has declared a local state of emergency, provided that (i) the catastrophic nature of the declared emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe to assemble a quorum in a single location and (ii) the purpose of the meeting is to provide for the continuity of operations of the public body or the discharge of its lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities. Under current law, public bodies may only meet in such manner when the Governor has declared a state of emergency, and only for the purpose of addressing the emergency. Finally, the bill requires public bodies meeting through electronic communication means during a local or state declaration of a state of emergency to (a) make arrangements for public access to such meeting through electronic communication means, including videoconferencing if already used by the public body, and (b) provide the public with the opportunity to comment at such meetings when public comment is customarily received.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: No

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Preliminary, No Impact

8. Fiscal Implications: The provisions of this bill are not expected to create an additional fiscal impact on state agencies.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: All state agencies and other public bodies covered by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No

11. Other Comments: None