



**Councilmember David Alvarez
Councilmember Marti Emerald
City of San Diego**

News Release

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Contact: Lisa Schmidt 619-210-9499
lmschmidt@sandiego.gov

Councilmembers Alvarez & Emerald Propose New Reforms for Open Government

SAN DIEGO, CA. Councilmembers David Alvarez and Marti Emerald today joined former Councilmember and President of Californians Aware, Donna Frye, in proposing new amendments to the San Diego City Charter to make it easier for the public to access City records.

“Open and transparent government is critical to maintaining a healthy civic dialogue on all decisions made on behalf of the public,” said Alvarez, “This proposal is a step forward in restoring trust by ensuring a more open and accessible government.”

In the last few weeks, the City of San Diego has experienced two major failures in providing the public with open and transparent government. The Balboa Park Celebration Inc. committee was given more than \$2 million in city tax dollars to stage a 2015 centennial celebration and did not initially produce any results or provided any accountability for the money spent. The second open government failure was the City’s administrative regulation regarding email retention, which was initiated without any public notice or discussion. In both instances, the public was never informed about what was going on and the only recourse for members of the public was to threaten litigation.

“The public should have an expectation that their rights of access to city meetings and documents are respected and are not denied, waived or ignored,” said Emerald.
“Councilmember Alvarez and I are committed to increasing public access to information and ensuring the public’s right to know what their City government is doing.”

The ballot measure would accomplish the following goals by amending sections 215, 216 and 216.1 of the City Charter:

1. Require that City records be retained for a minimum of two years
2. Requires that when the City contracts with a service provider that the records created in the course of conducting city business are the joint property of the City and the service provider
3. Require the City to review on a regular basis any written policies that restrict public access to city documents and require the City Council to re-affirm the need to keep any such policies in place
4. Requires any ordinance, regulation, or policy adopted by the City that limits the right of access beyond state or federal law requirements shall not be effective until justified with findings of fact
5. States the commitment to and the importance of open data

“As we celebrate Sunshine Week, it is important that public access to government information is protected and respected. Placing these City Charter amendments on the November 2014 ballot and letting the voters decide is the best way to do that,” said Donna Frye.

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Alvarez is the Councilmember for the Eighth Council District of the City of San Diego and is Chair of the City Council’s Committee on the Environment.

Emerald is the Councilmember for the Ninth Council District of the City of San Diego and is Chair of the Public Safety and Livable Neighborhoods Committee.