

Suggested Title: BOS-Please Restore Zoom Comments

Dear Editor,

The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors recently stopped accepting public comments from people participating in the meetings using the online forum Zoom. The Board is concerned about being interrupted by hate speech from so called "Zoom bombers."

We agree that the internationally-focused hate speech of "Zoom bombers" who have attacked other counties is not legitimate public discourse at a local Board of Supervisors meeting. We are glad that Zoom now has many safeguards in place to defend against these attacks. Because of these safeguards, we need not let the possibility of abuse wipe out the online forum for the many people Zooming in to provide legitimate local concerns to the Board of Supervisors. If Calaveras County is committed to public engagement, then it will empower these legitimate voices to be heard.

For citizens of rural counties like ours, being able to engage local government using online platforms isn't just convenient, it is essential. Our population is aging, gas prices remain high, and most residents are many miles from the County seat. The right to engage with government shouldn't be limited because your car broke down, or you're home sick, or any of the many other reasons why commenting in person can become untenable.

We hope that the Board of Supervisors will restore the option for providing public comment via Zoom. We thank the Planning Commission for continuing to accept Zoom comments.

With gratitude,
Megan Fiske
CAP/CPC Outreach Coordinator
San Andreas, CA