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AB 1637 - Local Government: Internet Websites and Email Addresses

On October 8, 2023, Governor Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill (“AB”) 1637 into law. AB 1637 requires all cities and counties, including charter cities, to transition all public-facing websites, employee websites, and employee email addresses to a “.gov” or “.ca.gov” domain. Special districts are not required to comply with AB 1637.

Local agencies are required to make these changes by no later than January 1, 2029. If a city or county does not have a compliant website by the deadline, then the legislation provides that the agency must redirect their existing website to a website with a proper domain name, ending in “.gov” or “.ca.gov.” The bill does not include a similar provision with regards to noncompliant employee email addresses.

AB 1637 clarifies that California’s local agencies qualify for both a “.gov” and a “.ca.gov” domain without paying any fee. AB 1637 further provides that if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the requirements of AB 1637 contain costs mandated by the state, that reimbursement will be made available to local agencies through the state mandate process.

The bill text states that the transition to “.gov” and “.ca.gov” domains will both improve cybersecurity and aid users in recognizing when they are accessing an official governmental resource.

Cities and counties can find information on changing their website domain at <https://domainnamerequest.cdt.ca.gov/>.