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## Inventory of the California State Assembly Local Government Committee Records, 1940-1996

### Inventory: See individual series.

California State Archives  
Office of the Secretary of State  
Sacramento, California

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#### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** California State Assembly Local Government Committee records,

**Date (inclusive):** 1940-1996

**Collection Numbers:** See individual series.

**Creator:** Assembly Local Government Committee, Assembly Municipal and County Government Committee

**Extent:** 76 cubic feet

**Repository:** California State Archives  
Sacramento, California

**Abstract:** This collection contains the records of the California State Assembly Local Government Committee and its predecessor, the Municipal and County Government Committee. They reflect the activity of the committees in overseeing legislation and other matters affecting California's local governments, including counties, cities, local agency formation committee, water districts, and other special districts. The records cover the years, 1940-1996, with the bulk from 1969-1996. They are comprised of bill files, hearing files, subject files, correspondence files, legislative counsel opinions and court opinions.

**Language:** English

#### Access

Collection is open for research.

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#### Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], [Name of Committee] Records, LP[number]:[folder number], California State Archives, Office of the Secretary of State, Sacramento, California

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## Acquisition Information

The California State Archives received some of these records as a voluntary transfer from the committees. After the modification of the California Legislative Open Records Act in 1996 (ch. 928, SB1507), this committee like others was required to deposit their records at California State Archives.

## Committee History

Since the California legislature was first organized, there has been an Assembly committee concerned with the affairs of local governments. The earliest committee, the Assembly Counties and County Boundaries Committee, focused on the boundaries and divisions of counties and the salaries of county officials. By the 1880s, the Assembly added the Assembly County and Township Committee and the Municipal Corporations Committee. The Counties and County Boundaries and the County and Township Government Committees ceased operation after 1911. Apparently to replace both, the Assembly created the County Government Committee in 1913. In the same year, a Committee on Libraries to review matters concerning local libraries was established. The Municipal Corporations Committee, the County Government Committee and the Libraries Committee continued to operate until 1943 when the Assembly formed the Municipal and County Government Committee in their places. It was "assigned the subject matter in the Government Code relating to the government of cities, counties, cities and counties, districts, and other political subdivisions of the state, uncodified laws relating there to, and other matters relating to municipal and county government (HR438, July 11, 1968, Assembly Journal, p. 5709).

In 1969, the committee was renamed the Assembly Local Government Committee but kept its original scope of addressing all matters "relating to local government" (HR 414, August 4, 1969, Assembly Journal, p. 7394). They were specifically excluded from addressing the boundaries of school districts.

As both the Municipal and County Government and later as the Local Government Committee, the committee had some distinctive characteristics in comparison to other standing committees in the Assembly. In the opinion of its members and its staff, the committee was seen as less important than other committees. John Knox, chair of the committee from 1963 to 1975, called the committee the "worst in the house" for a member to be appointed. Thomas Willoughby, principal staff analyst from 1961-1977, observed, "it wasn't that the committee was unimportant, it was just that the issues it deal with didn't have a lot of political sex appeal" (Willoughby Oral History, p. 6; see related collections). Another unique quality was the continuity and effectiveness of its staff. Thomas Willoughby (fifteen years) and his successor Julie Castelli Nauman (eleven years) provided the committee with expert assistance in evaluating measures. In addition, John Knox was the first chair in the Assembly to ask his staff to prepare bill analyses that were distributed to all members of the committee. This practice eventually spread to all committees in the legislature (Willoughby Oral History, p. 6).

Most notably, the committee was different because the committee's scope meant that it did not have a single major state agency with which it worked closely. Instead, its main advisors were officials in local government, as well as the professional associations and lobbyists that represented them. Close relationships were common between committee members and staff and such groups as the League of California Cities, the California Association of Local Agency Formation, and the County Supervisors Association of California. Often, the committee arranged to hold hearings at the same time as annual meetings of such groups.

Though the official scope of the committee has stayed consistent since the creation of the Municipal and County Government Committee in 1943, certain measures and social changes have resulted in new areas of investigations. As a result of recommendations from Governor Pat Brown's Commission on Metropolitan Area Problems, the Knox-Nisbet Act (AB1662 and SB861) was passed and chaptered in 1963 (Thomas Willoughby to Editor, CALAFCO Newsletter, September 18, 1975, Assembly Local Government Records, LP327:431). The broad goal of the bill was the "discouragement of urban sprawl" and "the orderly formation" of local government; its main mechanism was the creation of Local Agency Formation Committees (known as LAFCo) in every county "to regulate the expansion, reorganization, creation, dissolution of cities and special districts." Because these were new local governmental organizations with some power to regulate the actions of other local government, in the wake of their creation, committee constantly evaluated subsequent bills seeking to clarify distinct responsibilities for each form of local government. At the same time, the committee increasingly returned to the issues of development, growth, and sprawl that had originally inspired the Knox-Nisbet Act. In the 1970s, this concern was at times made more difficult because of the overlap in responsibilities between the Local Government Committee and the Assembly Planning, Land Use and Energy Committee. By the early 1980s, the Local Government Committee had secured primary review authority over local planning issues (John T. Knox to Leo T. McCarthy, July 15, 1974, Assembly Local Government Records, LP327:430; Robert C. Frazee to Willie L. Brown, January 27, 1981, Assembly Local Government Records, LP327:448).

The committee also played an important role in creating the guidelines for the original California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (AB2045). After the California Supreme Court ruled that its measures applied to private as well as public projects, the committee helped developed provisions to apply this wider scope and to reconcile the measure with federal requirements for similar environmental impact statements. No political shift had more impact on the committee than the series of efforts to control property taxes in California. The ratification by the voters of the Property Tax Initiative (Proposition 13) in 1978 resulted in new concerns for the committee. In its wake, many measures considered by the committee focused on how local governments could finance projects under the new fiscal constraints imposed by the

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measure. The following year the passage of the Gann Initiative (Proposition 4) further limited the ability of local governments to increase their budgets through new forms of assessments. In the wake of both measures, the Committee considered various measures to make up for these strict budget limitations. The Mello-Roos Community Facility Act of 1982 (AB3564 and SB2001) was one such measure that allowed local governments to impose fees on developers of new subdivisions to pay for community facilities in the areas. With fiscal constraints on local government, the issue of state mandates for local government without adequate state funding became a constant source of discussion and legislation. Because the committee dealt with a variety of local governments, it often found itself considering measures that resulted in face-offs between counties, school districts, special districts, and cities, all competing for parts of limited revenues. Such debates, alongside the perennial questions of local vs. state governmental scope, the integrity of local governments, and the need for special legislation for specific areas, will continue to keep the Assembly Local Government Committee busy in the 21st century.

Available at the California State Archives is Appendix A that lists the names of the chairs of the Municipal and County Government and the Local Government Committees from 1943 to 2002.

### **Scope and Content**

The Assembly Local Government Committee Records consist of 76 cubic feet of records reflecting the activity of the committee in overseeing legislation and other matters affecting California's local governments, including counties, cities, local agency formation committee, water districts, and other special districts. The records cover the years, 1940-1996, with the bulk from 1969-1996. They are comprised of bill files, hearing files, subject files, correspondence files, legislative counsel opinions and court opinions. Although the Municipal and County Government Committee began in 1943, records from the first eight years are entirely lacking in the Archives holdings and there are no bill files for the committee.

All of the series in the collection provide insight into the many relationships between the state of California and the many local governments within its boundaries. Bill files cover such diverse topics as requirements for the sterilization of stray animals (AB302), the creation of regional planning agencies, the application of the Brown Act requiring open meetings to various local government, the appropriate jurisdiction in cases of shopping cart theft, the regulation of subdivision of land in multi-unit residential area, and the conversion of military bases to civilian uses in the 1990s. The issue of how best to regulate growth in California reoccurs repeatedly, often in connection with legislation about the scope of Local Agency Formation Committees. In bill, hearing, and subject files, the appropriate application of the California Environmental Quality Act is reviewed from its incarnation in the 1970s to the controversies in the 1990s. Researchers interested in the practical adjustments made by the state, county, and local governments in the wake of the "tax revolt" of the 1970s and the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 will find many perspectives.

Regular correspondents about legislation and committee matters as well as speakers at hearings included representatives from the Association of California Water Agencies, California State Association of Counties, California Special Districts Association, California Taxpayers Association, City Clerks Association of California, County Supervisors Association of California, Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, League of California Cities, and from individual cities and counties.

For researchers interested in the workings of the California State Legislature, the correspondence and subject files provides insight into the varied duties provided by committee members and staff, the allocation of their time, and their perception of the role of the committee for the Assembly.

It is anticipated that the Archives will receive further records from the Assembly Local Government Committee. Researchers should check for recently received, unprocessed records of the committee.

### **Related Collections at the California State Archives**

Eugene Chappie Papers

Dominic L. Cortese Papers

William Craven Papers

Sam Farr Papers

Robert Frazee Papers

Mike Gotch Papers

John Knox Papers

Richard Rainey Papers

Michael Sweeney Papers

Senate Local Government Committee Records

Oral Histories of Committee Staff

Thomas H. Willoughby, oral history interview conducted by Anne Lage, 1988, Regional Oral History Office, University of California, Berkeley for the State Government Oral History Program, California State Archives.

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**Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been associated with these materials in the Archives' automated public access system (currently in development, September 2003).

Knox, John T. (John Theryll), 1924-

Willoughby, Thomas H., 1935-

California. Legislature. Assembly. Local Government Committee.

Environmental law - California.

Proposition 13 (California property tax initiative), 1978.

California. California Environmental Quality Act.

Series 1. **Bill Files, 1969-1996.**

**Physical Description:** 812 file folders.

**Scope and Content Note**

**Arrangement**

Bill files are arranged chronologically by legislative session then numerically and alphabetically by bill number. Bills that deal with the duties, status, and regulations of local governments are generally referred to the Assembly Local Government Committee. Bill files generally include the analysis of bills prepared by legislative staff and may also contain correspondence, special reports, newspaper articles, and similar materials. The files tend to include more information after 1979. Because of the broad scope of the committee, bills considered by the committee may be as specific as proposed changes to a single water district or as wide-ranging as the California Environmental Quality Act (AB2045, 1970). The committee also reviewed bills that responded specific emergencies in localities; for examples AB1974 (1993-1994) that helped business owners with losses from the Los Angeles Riots of 1992; SB248 and SB273 (1993-1994) in response to damage caused by the Northridge Earthquake of 1994; SB863, SB864, and SB866 in response to the Orange County financial crisis. After the passage of the measures (SB617, 1991-1992 and SB1135, 1993-1994) that resulted in the Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund that required a certain amount of local property taxes to go towards public schools, local governments supported various measures that would protect their share of the remaining revenue.

- Microfilm copies of bill files are available for the years 1969-1988.
- Assembly Local Government Committee, 1969-1996
- 1969: AB81-AB2326, ACA51, ACA67 (2ff) MF LP214:192-193
- 1970: AB60-AB2529, ACA33, ACA51, ACR11 (2ff) MF LP214:194-195
- 1970: SB15-SB1304, SCA19, SJR35 (1ff) MF LP214:196
- 1971: AB19-AB3094, ACA14, ACA55 (3ff) MF LP214:197-199
- 1971: SB46-SB1634, SJR93 (1ff) MF LP214:200
- 1972: AB27-AB2374, ACA31, ACA55 (2ff) MF LP214:201-202
- 1972: SB54-SB1468 (1ff) MF LP214:203
- 1973-1974: AB14-AB4415, ACA12, ACA91, AJR10, AJR59 (3ff) MF LP214:204-206
- 1973-1974: SB33-SB2416, SJR53 (1ff) MF LP214:207
- 1975-1976: AB20-AB4526, ACA18-ACA99, ACR167, AJR4 (5ff) MF LP214:208-209 MF:LP242:147-149
- 1975-1976: SB39-SB2186 (2ff) MF LP214:210 MF LP242:150
- 1977-1978: AB8-AB3824, ACA3-ACA78, ACR8-ACR122 (2ff) MF LP214:211-212
- 1977-1978: SB44-SB2208, SCA20, SCA35 (1ff) MF LP214:213
- 1979-1980: AB9-AB3477, ACA56, ACA85, ACR51 (17ff) MF LP187:158-172, MF LP214:214-215
- 1979-1980: SB51-SB2025, SCR29, SCR58 (7ff) MF LP206:194-199 MF LP214:216 SB462 (1ff) LP232:235
- 1981-1982: AB30-AB3796, ACA33-ACA86, AJR69 (14ff) MF LP206:200-212 MF LP214:217
- 1981-1982: AB251, AB2470 (2ff) MF LP212:68-69
- 1981-1982: SB55-SB2052 (7ff) MF LP206:213-218
- 1981-1982: SB66, SB297, SB1425 (2ff) MF LP212:70-71
- 1983-1984: AB14-AB4045, ACA54-ACA56, ACR150 (16ff) MF LP215:209-222
- 1983-1984: AB832, AB2010 (2ff) MF LP232:236-237
- 1983-1984: AB2038 (6ff) MF LP242:163-169
- 1983-1984: SB36-SB2337, SJR15 (12ff) MF LP242:151-162
- 1985-1986: AB49-AB810 MF LP255:195-201 AB820-4388, ACA36 (26ff) MF LP232:201-225
- 1985-1986: SB61-SB2441, SJR30 (9ff) MF LP232:226-234
- 1987-1988: AB13-AB4673, ACA9-ACA53 (29ff) MF LP263:163-191
- 1987-1988: Preprint SB1; SB97-SB2893 (29ff) MF LP263:192-220
- 1989-1990: AB35-AB4267, ACA1-ACA53, ACR131, AB1X-AB37X (71ff) LP292:1-70
- 1989-1990: SB20-SB2882, SCA2, SCA19, SJR36, SB27X (70ff) LP292:71-140
- 1991-1992: AB3-AB3813, ACA3-ACA39, ACR18-ACR108 AB27X-AB54X (94ff) LP292:141-234
- 1991-1992: SB11-SB2037, SCA13 (82ff) LP292:235-316
- 1993-1994: AB1-AB3800, ACA1-ACA45, ACR104, AJR59, AB90X-AB142X (82ff) LP327:1-81
- 1993-1994: SB1-SB2112, SCA20, SCA336, SCR18 (59ff) LP327:82-140
- 1995-1996: AB5-AB3503, ACA7-38, ACR90, AB2X (79ff) LP327:141-219
- 1995-1996: SB8-SB2169, SB11X (74ff) LP327:220-283

Series 2. **Hearing Files, 1951-1992, 1995.**

**Physical Description:** 179 file folders.

**Scope and Content Note**

**Arrangement**

Hearing files are described by date of hearing

Hearing files for Assembly Local Government Committee may contain agendas, audiotapes, transcripts, testimony, background reports, and working files for regular session hearings, interim hearings, and some joint hearings. Tapes (both dictabelts and audiocassettes) have been moved to a cold-storage vault for preservation purposes and separation sheets are in the appropriate files to alert the researcher to the existence of such tapes. When complete, hearings files can provide in-depth analysis of issues of concern to the committee and California's local government. Their topics reveal some continuity in concerns; the earliest hearing files in the Archives from 1951 address the division of powers between state and local governments. The topic reoccurs in subsequent decades. The appropriate response to suburban development and the application of the California Environmental Quality Act are also recurrent topics. The best and fairest methods for financing local government responsibilities are a regular concern, especially after the passage of Proposition 13. Other topics that receive less frequent attention include contracts with private business for public services, boundary changes, homelessness, transit districts, the specific needs of rural areas, County Assessors Offices, the division of Los Angeles County, disaster assistance. The committee often held joint hearings with the Senate Local Government Committee, and less often with the Assembly Committees on Transportation, Housing and Community Development, and Revenue and Taxation. There is a detailed list of the hearings and their topics available at the California State Archives as Appendix B to this finding aid.

Series 3. **Subject Files, 1944-1985.**

**Physical Description:** 62 file folders.

**Scope and Content Note**

**Arrangement**

Subject files are arranged alphabetically by subject.

Subject files contain studies, correspondence with local governments and interest groups, press clippings, and reports on topics of interest to the Municipal and County Government and the Local Government Committees. The files date from a variety of periods and were maintained by the committee over varying lengths of time. Some files focus on the implementation of the United States and California Supreme Courts ruling that "One Man, One Vote" principles applied to local government elections. A collection of legislative counsel opinions documents the changing legal powers of Local Agency Formation Commissions. The issue of how best to finance local government reoccurs in various folders; an interesting proposal in 1972 recommended the abolition of property taxes and the implementation of income taxes at the local level. The controversial development of parts of San Bruno Mountain in San Mateo County is well-documented through environmental impact reports, comments by the LAFCo, newspapers reports, and other documents, mainly from the 1980s. Water sources for the city of Carlsbad in San Diego County are also discussed in series of studies, court rulings, and newspaper articles. The concern of the committee with how to revise the Subdivision Map Act appears in the files of the task force that helped developed AB1173 (1981-1982). There is a detailed list of subject headings available at the California State Archives as Appendix C.

Series 4. **Correspondence files, 1964-1985.**

**Physical Description:** 32 file folders.

**Scope and Content Note**

**Arrangement**

Correspondence files are arranged chronologically.

Correspondence includes letter received and written by the chairs of the Committee, its members, and its staff members.

The bulk is from 1973-1985. The correspondence documents the wide-ranging interests of the committee in matters concerning local governments, its role of providing information to other elected officials about the specifics of California's laws regarding local governments, and its close working relationship with a wide range of associations, including the League of California Cities, the County Supervisors Association of California, and California Local Area Formation Committees.

- Committee Correspondence. 1955-1956 (3ff) LP38:17, LP38:19-20
- Committee Correspondence. 1964 (1ff) LP327:425
- Committee Correspondence. 1973-1985 (27ff) LP327:426-452
- Committee Correspondence. 1989-1990 (1ff) LP327:453

Series 5. **Legislative Counsel Opinions, 1962-1982.**

**Physical Description:** 12 file folders.

**Scope and Content Note**

**Arrangement**

Opinions are arranged by their date of issue

Responses by the Legislative Counsels to questions about existing statutes and proposed legislation and their effects on local governments.

- Opinions, 1962-1974 (6ff) LP215:262-267
- Opinions, 1975-1982 (6ff) LP216:1-5

Series 6. **Court Decisions, 1940-1982.**

**Physical Description:** 22 file folders.

**Scope and Content Note**

**Arrangement**

Court decisions are arranged by the year of decision.

A collection of court decisions by state and federal courts that pertain to local government operations and were deemed critical by committee staff. For most years, an index is in the folder. LP215:234-256