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**Executive Director**

March 2013

April 17, 2013  
Agenda Item 15

Dear Contra Costa Public Official:

Open, accessible government is a cornerstone to building public trust, which is essential to effective governance. The Contra Costa Taxpayers Association invites you to participate in national Sunshine Week ([sunshineweek.org](http://sunshineweek.org)) to affirm your agency's ongoing commitment to openness, transparency and accountability of local government officials.

We invite you to adopt a proclamation at one of your March or April meetings, commemorating Sunshine Week and recognizing the importance of government transparency and accessibility. For your convenience a suggested proclamation is enclosed and is also available on the CoCoTAX website ([cocotax.org](http://cocotax.org)).

You are encouraged to tailor the Sunshine Week proclamation to include specific action steps you plan to take this year to improve your agency's public access. You may be working on improving your website, streamlining the process for handling public records requests or expanding the scope of public services accessible online. Whatever your agency is doing to promote open, accessible, responsive government, we want to recognize your commitment and highlight your efforts.

Please notify us of the meeting date at which you will adopt a Sunshine Week proclamation so that we can attend and recognize your ongoing efforts to promote government transparency. I will be happy to answer any questions and may be reached at 925-289-6900 or [krishunt@cocotax.org](mailto:krishunt@cocotax.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kris Hunt".

Kris Hunt  
Executive Director

Enclosure

Sample Proclamation In Recognition of "Sunshine Week" March 10-16, 2013

WHEREAS, the California Legislature has found that access to information concerning the conduct of the people's business is a fundamental and necessary right, per [California Government Code Sections 54950, et seq.](#); and

WHEREAS, "[Sunshine Week](#)" was initiated by the American Society of News Editors to educate the public about the importance of open government; and

WHEREAS, James Madison, the father of the United States Constitution, wrote that "consent of the governed" requires that the people be able to "arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives;" and

WHEREAS, "Sunshine Week" coincides with James Madison's birthday on March 16<sup>th</sup> because he wrote the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that guarantees freedom of speech and press — and by extension the right and need of the people and press to know what their government is doing;

WHEREAS, every citizen in our constitutional republic and under State Statutes has a right of open access to government meetings and public records; and

WHEREAS, an open and accessible government is vital to establishing and maintaining the people's trust and confidence in their government and in the government's ability to effectively serve its citizens; and

WHEREAS, the protection of every person's right of access to public records and notice of government meetings is a high priority of (this public entity); and

WHEREAS, (this public entity), is committed to timely notice, openness and transparency in all aspects of its operations and seeks to set a high standard in this regard; and

TOWARD THAT END, (this public entity) directs that:

*(List measures the entity will undertake this year to allow greater openness and accessibility and that address the transparency needs of the community)*

NOW, THEREFORE, (this public entity) commits during this Sunshine Week, March 10-16, commemorating the 262<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of James Madison's birth, and throughout the year 2013, to work diligently to enhance the public's access to government records and information; to increase information provided electronically and online; and to ensure that all meetings of deliberative bodies under its jurisdiction, and their committees, are fully noticed, open to the public; and that, whenever possible, audio or video recordings of public meetings shall be undertaken and made available publicly via its website.

