

# HOUSE BILL NO. 5599

December 02, 2021, Introduced by Reps. Whitsett, Steven Johnson and Yaroeh and referred to the Committee on Local Government and Municipal Finance.

A bill to amend 1976 PA 267, entitled  
"Open meetings act,"  
by amending section 3a (MCL 15.263a), as amended by 2021 PA 54.

**THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:**

1           Sec. 3a. (1) A meeting of a public body held, in whole or in  
2 part, electronically by telephonic or video conferencing in  
3 compliance with this section and, except as otherwise required in  
4 this section, all of the provisions of this act applicable to a  
5 nonelectronic meeting, is permitted by this act in the following

1 circumstances:

2 (a) Before March 31, 2021 and retroactive to March 18, 2020,  
3 any circumstances, including, but not limited to, any of the  
4 circumstances requiring accommodation of absent members described  
5 in section 3(2).

6 (b) Subject to ~~subdivision~~**subdivisions** (d) **and (e)**, on and  
7 after March 31, 2021 through December 31, 2021, only those  
8 circumstances requiring accommodation of members absent for the  
9 reasons described in section 3(2). For the purpose of permitting an  
10 electronic meeting due to a local state of emergency or state of  
11 disaster, this subdivision applies only as follows:

12 (i) To permit the electronic attendance of a member of the  
13 public body who resides in the affected area.

14 (ii) To permit the electronic meeting of a public body that  
15 usually holds its meetings in the affected area.

16 (c) Subject to ~~subdivision~~**subdivisions** (d) **and (e)**, after  
17 December 31, 2021, only in the circumstances requiring  
18 accommodation of members absent due to military duty as described  
19 in section 3(2).

20 (d) On and after March 31, 2021, for a public body that is an  
21 agricultural commodity group, any circumstances, including, but not  
22 limited to, any of the circumstances requiring accommodation of  
23 absent members described in section 3(2). As used in this  
24 subdivision, "agricultural commodity group" means any of the  
25 following:

26 (i) A committee as that term is defined in section 2 of the  
27 agricultural commodities marketing act, 1965 PA 232, MCL 290.652.

28 (ii) The state beef industry commission created in section 3 of  
29 the beef industry commission act, 1972 PA 291, MCL 287.603.

1           (iii) The potato industry commission created in section 2 of  
2 1970 PA 29, MCL 290.422.

3           (iv) The Michigan bean commission created in section 3 of 1965  
4 PA 114, MCL 290.553.

5           **(e) The prerequisite circumstances to holding an electronic**  
6 **meeting described in subdivisions (b) and (c) do not apply to an**  
7 **electronic proceeding held pursuant to section 26, 34, or 62 of the**  
8 **tax tribunal act, 1973 PA 186, MCL 205.726, 205.734, and 205.762.**

9           (2) A meeting of a public body held electronically under this  
10 section must be conducted in a manner that permits 2-way  
11 communication so that members of the public body can hear and be  
12 heard by other members of the public body, and so that public  
13 participants can hear members of the public body and can be heard  
14 by members of the public body and other participants during a  
15 public comment period. A public body may use technology to  
16 facilitate typed public comments during the meeting submitted by  
17 members of the public participating in the meeting that may be read  
18 to or shared with members of the public body and other participants  
19 to satisfy the requirement under this subsection that members of  
20 the public be heard by others during the electronic meeting and the  
21 requirement under section 3(5) that members of the public be  
22 permitted to address the electronic meeting.

23           (3) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (8), a physical  
24 place is not required for an electronic meeting held under this  
25 section, and members of a public body and members of the public  
26 participating electronically in a meeting held under this section  
27 that occurs in a physical place are to be considered present and in  
28 attendance at the meeting for all purposes.

29           (4) If a public body directly or indirectly maintains an

1 official internet presence that includes monthly or more frequent  
2 updates of public meeting agendas or minutes, the public body  
3 shall, in addition to any other notices that may be required under  
4 this act, post advance notice of a meeting held electronically  
5 under this section on a portion of the public body's website that  
6 is fully accessible to the public. The public notice on the website  
7 must be included on either the homepage or on a separate webpage  
8 dedicated to public notices for nonregularly scheduled or  
9 electronic public meetings that is accessible through a prominent  
10 and conspicuous link on the website's homepage that clearly  
11 describes its purpose for public notification of nonregularly  
12 scheduled or electronic public meetings. Subject to the  
13 requirements of this section, any scheduled meeting of a public  
14 body may be held as an electronic meeting under this section if a  
15 notice consistent with this section is posted at least 18 hours  
16 before the meeting begins. Notice of a meeting of a public body  
17 held electronically must clearly explain all of the following:

18 (a) Why the public body is meeting electronically.

19 (b) How members of the public may participate in the meeting  
20 electronically. If a telephone number, internet address, or both  
21 are needed to participate, that information must be provided  
22 specifically.

23 (c) How members of the public may contact members of the  
24 public body to provide input or ask questions on any business that  
25 will come before the public body at the meeting.

26 (d) How persons with disabilities may participate in the  
27 meeting.

28 (5) Beginning on ~~the effective date of the amendatory act that~~  
29 ~~added this section,~~ **October 16, 2020**, if an agenda exists for an

1 electronic meeting held under this section by a public body that  
2 directly or indirectly maintains an official internet presence that  
3 includes monthly or more frequent updates of public meeting agendas  
4 or minutes, the public body shall, on a portion of the website that  
5 is fully accessible to the public, make the agenda available to the  
6 public at least 2 hours before the electronic meeting begins. This  
7 publication of the agenda does not prohibit subsequent amendment of  
8 the agenda at the meeting.

9 (6) A public body shall not, as a condition of participating  
10 in an electronic meeting of the public body held under this  
11 section, require a person to register or otherwise provide his or  
12 her name or other information or otherwise to fulfill a condition  
13 precedent to attendance, other than mechanisms established and  
14 required by the public body necessary to permit the person to  
15 participate in a public comment period of the meeting.

16 (7) Members of the general public otherwise participating in a  
17 meeting of a public body held electronically under this section are  
18 to be excluded from participation in a closed session of the public  
19 body held electronically during that meeting if the closed session  
20 is convened and held in compliance with the requirements of this  
21 act applicable to a closed session.

22 (8) At a meeting held under this section that accommodates  
23 members absent due to military duty or a medical condition, only  
24 those members absent due to military duty or a medical condition  
25 may participate remotely. Any member who is not on military duty or  
26 does not have a medical condition must be physically present at the  
27 meeting to participate.

28 Enacting section 1. This amendatory act does not take effect  
29 unless Senate Bill No. \_\_\_\_\_ or House Bill No. 5598 (request no.

**1** 04699'21) of the 101st Legislature is enacted into law.