



# County of San Mateo

## Inter-Departmental Correspondence

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**Department:** BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
**DISTRICT 5**  
**File #:** 19-784

Board Meeting Date: 8/6/2019

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**Special Notice / Hearing:** None  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**To:** Honorable Board of Supervisors  
**From:** David J. Canepa, Supervisor  
**Subject:** Senate Bill 160

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt a resolution urging the State Legislature to take action to promote recognition of language diversity in emergency planning, and to adopt Senate Bill 160 which will require the integration of cultural competence into local entities' emergency plans.

### **BACKGROUND:**

SB 160 was introduced in January 2019 as a result of discussions during hearings of the Joint Legislative Committee on Emergency Management which were convened in November 2018 by Senator Hannah Beth Jackson in which Jeff Norris, an emergency services coordinator for the San Mateo County Office of Emergency Services participated as a panelist. During these hearings, panelists called for improvements to emergency alert translations as well as specified plans to reach diverse populations who may be missed by traditional communication strategies.

### **DISCUSSION:**

It is critical that all our communities receive the life-saving information they need during an emergency or natural disaster. More than 200 languages are spoken in California and 44% of those residents speak a language other than English at home. In San Mateo County, more than 100 languages are spoken and 46% of County residents speak a language other than English at home. San Mateo County must do everything possible to ensure that its emergency plans incorporate the diverse needs of its residents. Addressing the need for cultural competency in emergency planning is a crucial step in safeguarding all Californians from the increasing threat of disasters and emergencies. The need for improved translation and interpretation services within the emergency alert network and evacuation procedures is essential.

Looking forward, San Mateo County will need to update its emergency plan to integrate access and functional needs in order to address communications with all cultural populations within its jurisdiction. The need for improved translation and interpretation services within the emergency alert

network and evacuation procedures is essential.

This resolution contributes to the Shared Vision 2025 outcome of a healthy community by keeping all residents safe and provide them with all the communication tools necessary in order to protect them during emergency and disaster situations.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Previous updates to the County's emergency plans have cost approximately \$100,000. It is anticipated that the incorporation of SB 160's requirements will increase the costs of updating the County's plan but the amount of such increase, if any, cannot be determined at this time. If the implementation of SB 160 results in an increase to the County's costs in updating its emergency plan, the County will seek reimbursement through the Commission on State Mandates as directed by the legislation, or through grant funding.