

From: **Ann Harbour** <annharbour15@gmail.com>
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Subject: Electronic Participation Study
To: <foiacouncil@dls.virginia.gov>

Dear FOIA Council members:

Last year, this Subcommittee received almost 100 comments from members of the public and members of appointed bodies, asking that there be a study in 2021 of additional flexibility for regional and advisory bodies to meet electronically outside of emergencies. The experience of the past year has shown us that electronic meetings can be effective and transparent. The last year has also highlighted many longstanding inequities throughout the Commonwealth. Our regional and advisory boards are best served by having a diversity of experience and people in positions to shape conversations impacting all Virginians. By continuing to allow for electronic meetings for these regional and appointed bodies, you afford a greater diversity of individuals to participate, increasing access to the deliberative policy making entities and afforded an eye to barriers that may not otherwise be considered.

On behalf of the Alexandria Commission for Women, I respectfully ask that you consider studying the continuation of these flexibilities to ensure opportunities for broader participation by all Virginians wishing to share their time and talent with regional and appointed bodies.

Ann Harbour, MPA
Chair, Alexandria Commission for Women