

SACRAMENTO METROPOLITAN CABLE TELEVISION COMMISSION
PROGRAMMING POLICIES FOR
THE GOVERNMENT ACCESS CHANNEL
JUNE 1990 (Rev. 8/94)

Programming Policies

1.00 Introduction.

1.01 The Government Access Channel (GAC) is a channel granted to the Cities of Sacramento, Folsom and Galt and the County of Sacramento for the purpose of cablecasting cable television programs. The GAC is administered by the Sacramento Metropolitan Cable Television Commission, the Joint Powers Agency representing all four jurisdictions.

2.00 Objectives.

2.01 The GAC exists to distribute a variety of information about government, its programs, services and concerns. Specific objectives include:

- (a) Providing information about programs and services offered by government departments, agencies, boards, commissions, and government-supported agencies.
- (b) Expanding citizen awareness of government and its decision-making processes by exposing citizens to live and tape delayed government meetings.
- (c) Enhancing existing public information materials and use cable television as a public information tool.
- (d) Providing and distributing programming of interest to residents that will inform, educate, and enlighten, as well as encourage participation in government services, activities, and decision-making.

3.00 Municipal Programming Task Force.

3.01 The Municipal Programming Task Force (Task Force) consists of representatives appointed by each City Manager, the County Executive, and Executive Director of the Cable Commission. The Cable Commission staff will work with the Task Force to develop programming for the GAC. Task Force members will serve as liaisons between each jurisdiction and the Commission to encourage the use of the cable channel.

3.02 Issues raised concerning exceptions, variations, or modifications to this policy statement should be appealed to the Executive Director of the Cable Commission.

4.00 Use Policies.

4.01 The GAC is intended to provide information about City and County government. Therefore, local government program requests are encouraged from a City or County department, board, commission, special district, or local joint powers agency. Other non-government agencies, groups, or individuals wishing to use the GAC, but not sponsored by one of the above entities, will be referred to one of the public access channels. The GAC may also cablecast programs or meetings of other levels of government consistent with the above objectives.

4.02 Government departments and entities receiving cablecasting time may invite outside organizations, agencies, government, or individuals to participate in a program as long as such invitees are central to the topic of the program. The jurisdiction must retain control of program content and production.

4.03 Request for use of GAC resources may be made through representatives of the Municipal Programming Task Force or the appropriate City Manager/County Executive. Commission staff may also approve programming requests from individual departments, provided the request is authorized by the local government department head originating the request. Joint powers agencies may request use through one of the participating jurisdictions or through the Commission staff. Special districts must request use through the Commission staff similar to that of a department.

5.00 Election Candidates.

5.01 The election programming policy of the Sacramento Metropolitan Cable Television Commission shall be to provide direct non-editorial information to the citizens of the Cities of Sacramento, Folsom, Galt, and the County of Sacramento concerning the operation and deliberation of local government. In addition, election coverage shall be limited to include forums covering local ballot measures, and candidates for nonpartisan local office. Such forums shall be conducted by a third party to be selected by the Commission upon the recommendation of the staff. Announcements for outside agencies shall generally not be permitted unless sponsored by a participating jurisdiction.

5.02 Declared candidates for any elective office and persons advocating any cause, viewpoint, or proposed policy of a partisan nature will not be eligible to appear on the GAC unless they appear in a forum in which all candidates or sides of an issue are given equal time.

(a) For purposes of this policy, a person is considered to be a candidate from the time of announcing publicly for any public office until the election has been held.

(b) This policy does not apply to persons who receive incidental air time as part of a public meeting being cablecast on the channel, nor to officials acting as part of their regular duties when such actions do not involve partisan policies.

6.00 Scheduling.

6.01 The GAC will be activated 24-hours per day. The Commission staff is responsible for scheduling

programs and for publicizing the schedule, as well as authorizing programming on the GAC in accordance with these policies. Programming will be scheduled according to the following order of priority:

- (a) Announcements or programs concerning emergencies affecting residents, health, or safety.
- (b) Public meetings.
- (c) Reoccurring programs and informational series or one-time special or non-regular informational programs.
- (d) Public service announcements.
- (e) Programs produced by persons, agencies, or groups outside the jurisdictions of interest to area residents that are submitted by City or County departments.
- (f) A bulletin board service giving printed information on government events and services when other programs are not being aired.

7.00 Program Restrictions.

7.01 The GAC resources cannot be used to produce or distribute:

- (a) Any materials designed to promote the sale of commercial products or services including advertising by and/or on behalf of candidates for public office.
- (b) A lottery as defined by Federal Communications Commission regulations or any advertisement of or information concerning a lottery.
- (c) Any obscene material.
- (d) Libelous or slandering material.

7.02 All GAC programs shall comply with applicable rules and regulations of the Federal, State, and local governments.

7.03 The jurisdiction submitting a program for cablecast is responsible for securing all rights and clearances from broadcast stations, networks, sponsors, music licensing organization representatives, and all other persons as may be necessary to transmit its program material over the cable television system.

7.04 No underwriting or sponsorship announcement shall be given to any individual or organization who provides financial or other resources for the production of cablecasting or programs on the GAC. However, an acknowledgement, if appropriate, will be given during the credit portion at the beginning and end of the program being cablecast. This policy does not preclude the acceptance of gifts or other resources from private individuals or organizations nor does it prohibit other forms of recognition as deemed appropriate by the recipient legislative bodies. Any exceptions to this policy shall be determined by the Commission.

8.00 Copyright of Programs.

8.01 The ownership and copyright for any program produced by any of the jurisdictions shall be held by the jurisdiction producing the program. The Commission shall hold the copyright on programs it produces. The jurisdiction holding the copyright on a program shall be liable for the content and use of that particular program. The jurisdictions and the Commission shall each have a nonexclusive license to use and reproduce without payment of royalties any program produced by the jurisdictions or the Commission through the use of these programming resources provided that the use and reproduction of such programming shall be for noncommercial purposes.

9.00 Operational Policies for Playback of Preproduced Programs.

9.01 Programs produced outside of Sacramento County may be shown on the GAC. Such a program must meet minimal technical standards and must meet the programming requirements set forth in these policies. A program submitted for cablecasting must be previewed by the Commission staff. Any dispute regarding the cablecasting of a particular program will be resolved by the Executive Director of the Commission. This decision may be appealed to the Cable Television Commission, whose decision will be final.

10.00 Operational Policies for Alphanumeric Programming.

10.01 Alphanumeric (bulletin board) programming is encouraged. Each jurisdiction may coordinate alphanumeric programming with the Commission staff.

11.00 Program Balancing.

11.01 All the legislative meetings will be cablecast in their entirety without a requirement for balancing of an issue presented at that public meeting. Requests for presentations for an opposing viewpoint during a legislative meeting will be directed to the appropriate jurisdiction for action on their agenda.

11.02 Programs about issues which are included on a local ballot such as voter initiatives and ballot measures will only be covered using a voter forum, with a neutral, third-party providing assistance to ensure content balancing. Representatives from both sides of an issue will be included in the program.

11.03 Programs which provide general information regarding government programs and services will be cablecast without a prerequisite for balance; however, unsolicited comments requesting time on the GAC for an opposing viewpoint will be forwarded to the Commission for review and appropriate action.

11.04 Programs which promote a local issue or policy yet to be decided by the legislative body may be controversial both to the general public and even among the participating jurisdictions. These are the types of programs which are most likely to require balancing. These programs will be brought to the Commission on a case-by-case basis for an affirmative decision on whether or not to balance the program.

At any time, in its sole discretion, the Commission may require balancing of a particular program giving both proponents, and opponents an opportunity to present both sides of the issue. Balancing of a program may be provided in a number of ways deemed most appropriate by the Commission. The following are examples of alternatives available to the Commission for balancing program content:

- (a) Accepting unsolicited requests from citizens or organizations with opposing viewpoints for channel time. The request for presenting an opposing viewpoint must be made in writing and will be forwarded to the Commission. Upon an affirmative action of the Commission, staff will schedule an appointment with the requesting party to videotape a three-minute statement for cablecast on the GAC. This will be done in a format similar to that used by television stations during their "editorial reply" segments. Should many people request opposing viewpoints, the matter will be presented to the Commission for an affirmative vote to determine whether an alternative method of balancing should be used. Alternative methods include:
 - 1) A forum or round-table discussion,
 - 2) A documentary program covering the opposing viewpoints,
 - 3) An invitation to the opposing viewpoints to present a videotape produced with their own resources.
- (b) Soliciting opposing viewpoints at the beginning and end of the program. Requests for channel time will be handled as described above.
- (c) Using a third party questioning forum format. This is the option recommended for all programs about issues appearing on local ballot. It may be effectively used to discuss other controversial issues.
- (d) Directing staff to script, produce, and edit both points of view into a documentary style program. This option is the most time consuming and costly option of implementation.

11.05 Programs which are requested to be cablecast by legislative action of a participating jurisdiction will be cablecast upon request as long as the program meets the technical requirements of the GAC. If the Cable Commission deems this program to be controversial and to require balancing, the Commission can direct staff to balance the program in a suitable manner or direct staff to assist another participating jurisdiction in production a program which presents an opposing viewpoint.

Programs reflecting an existing legislative policy which is outside the general administrative authority of a participating jurisdiction will not be cablecast without specific approval from the Cable Commission. For example, a program urging amnesty for individuals or sanctuary for refugees or other such topics which do not fall within the general administrative purview of the legislative body will be presented to the Commission for affirmative approval to both cablecast as well as to determine content balancing.

Production Policies For Cablecasting Public Meetings

12.00 Rules of Production.

12.01 The program will begin when the Chair calls the meeting to order. Prior to the meeting starting, a character generator message with music (no room noise) will identify that the meeting is about to begin, and the names of the members of the body. This message will appear 2 minutes prior to the start of the meeting and continue until the meeting is called to order. Video and audio coverage of the meeting will begin when the chair calls the meeting to order and will end when the meeting is adjourned, or otherwise ordered to be interrupted, by the Chair.

(It is recommended that the Chair of the meeting announce that the proceedings are being cablecast live or videotaped to be cablecast at a future time).

12.02 During recesses and executive sessions, a character generator message will explain (subject to legal constraints) the nature of the recess, with a music background. There will be no more than a 15-second transition to the character generator at the recess or adjournment of a meeting.

12.03 There will be only 3 camera angles used:

- (a) The first camera angle will stay on a wide shot of the body showing all the members.
- (b) The second angle will be used to show a close-up of a member or members that have been recognized by the Chair to speak, or the Chair while he or she is speaking. In the event that more than one member of the body is speaking, and they cannot be shown with a close-up, the wide shot will be used. This angle will also be used to show graphics (such as maps) that are used during the meeting.
- (c) The third angle will show the staff tables and the speaker podium. This camera will only be used to show speakers who have been recognized by the Chair.

There will be no close-up reaction shots either from members of the body or the audience. The wide-angle may be used when several members of the body are speaking and to allow another camera to move to the next speaker recognized by the Chair. To the extent possible, no audience shots will be shown unless requested by the Chair.

12.04 Character generator titles may be used to identify speakers. To the extent possible, the identification of public speakers will be done through the use of speaker identification forms transmitted to the character generator operator.

12.05 Wherever technically feasible, the audio will be taken directly from the sound system.

12.06 The meetings will be videotaped on two 3/4" VCR's to ensure continuous meeting coverage. At the prior request of the Chair or his/her designee, a VHS tape will be recorded at the time of the

meeting and provided to the public jurisdiction for its use. This tape will become the property of the jurisdiction and may be used for any purpose they desire, subject to copyright restrictions, e.g., no commercial use, etc.

12.07 Public meetings will be cablecast live whenever possible and will continue in their entirety without preemption.

12.08 A character generator crawl may be used to identify which item is being discussed, explain commonly-used acronyms, and summarize the actions taken at the meeting.

12.09 The agenda of each meeting will run for 30 minutes prior to the meeting in question.

12.10 Closed Session Reporting: The GAC shall not extend its coverage of local government meetings for the purpose of cablecasting the announcement that a closed session is commencing, nor will the GAC cablecast the reporting of the results of a closed session, unless such cablecasting is requested in advance by the chair or clerk of the local government entity. The GAC will remain in "stand-by" mode until a closed session concludes if that particular meeting has a continuing agenda.

13.00 Disposition of Meeting Tapes.

13.01 Tapes of the meetings are intended for cablecasting purposes only and not as an official record of the meetings. Provision of a copy of the meeting tape does not imply reliance on a complete or error-free duplication of the program.

13.02 The original tape of each meeting may be retained by Commission staff for production purposes.

13.03 Both master tapes and copies will be copyrighted in the name of the Commission to prevent unauthorized taping or use of the program.

13.04 Commission staff will make meeting copies available for the general public through the Public Library system.

14.00 Applicability.

14.01 The production policies are not applicable to any jurisdiction that has given notice to the Commission that it wishes to produce and record its own meetings. However, all public meetings cablecast on the GAC must conform with these policies.

15.00 Fee for Services.

15.01 Unless otherwise authorized by the Commission, taping and cablecasting of public meetings or other will be on a direct cost reimbursable basis, including reasonable charges for administrative costs and equipment maintenance.