

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
Eastern District of California
501 I Street, Suite 3-200
Sacramento, California 95814-7303

Chambers of
FREDRICK E. CLEMENT
Chief Bankruptcy Judge

(916) 930-4540

March 10, 2023

re: ZoomGov Appearances in Law and Motion Hearings and Status Conferences

An Open Letter to the Bar:

In the Eastern District we have long understood the value of remote appearances, particularly for non-evidentiary hearings. It's largely a problem of our geographic size and distance to the courthouse. Our district encompasses 34 of the state's 58 counties. For example, the City of Alturas, which is located in the far northeast corner of the district, is a hard five-hour drive from the nearest courthouse. So, for more than 30 years, the court has allowed parties and attorneys to appear telephonically at routine law and motion hearings, as well as status conferences.

I am pleased to inform you that the court is taking the next steps in facilitating remote appearances. Most of our courtrooms are now retrofitted with hybrid appearance technology. This will allow parties and attorneys will be able to appear in person, by telephone or by video, i.e., ZoomGov, simultaneously. We are accomplishing this on a department-by-department basis and a report of our progress follows.

Division	Department/Judge	Hardware Installation	In Use
Sacramento	Department A (Clement)	Completed	March 6, 2023
	Department B (Jaime)	Spring 2023	TBD
	Department C (Klein)	Completed	February 7, 2023
	Department D (Sargis)	TBD	TBD
Modesto		TBD	TBD
Fresno/Bakersfield	Department A (Niemann)	Completed	January 16, 2023
	Department B (Lastreto)	Completed	July 2022

Subject to the discretion of each judge, parties and attorneys will be able to participate in hearings via ZoomGov (audio or audio and video) or by CourtCall (audio only). For participating departments, I anticipate remote appearances will be used most heavily for routine hearings, e.g., law and motion, status conferences. In appropriate circumstances, this technology will also be available for evidentiary hearings.

Name: An Open Letter to the Bar

Subject: ZoomGov Appearances in Law and Motion Hearings and Status Conferences

Date: March 10, 2023

Page: 2

In preparation for a Zoom hearing be sure to do the following:

1. **Familiarize yourself with Department Specific Procedures.** Given that our judges are implementing the hybrid-courtroom technology at different times and in different ways, we have created a simple reference to help the bar and the public understand what technology is available for use in each courtroom. That reference guide is also located under the [“Remote Appearances”](#) portion of the website.
2. **Understand the Protocols for ZoomGov Use.** Our Judges and Clerks Office have developed “Procedures and Guidelines Governing Video and Telephonic Appearances Via ZoomGov.” These protocols dictate etiquette for use of ZoomGov technology. Do review them; they are located on the right side of the court’s homepage under [“Remote Appearances.”](#)
3. **Register for Each Remote Appearance.** The Information Technology Department has developed a mechanism by which attorneys and parties wishing to make a Zoom appearance will be able to register to do so. Since all departments require 24-hour advance notice of a Zoom appearance, it is important that you familiarize yourself with this functionality under the [“Court Calendars”](#) tab.
4. **Sign into ZoomGov.** After requesting a remote appearance, you must review the Pre-Hearing Disposition for your matter on the day of the hearing. Then you can click the ZoomGov link on the front of the [Pre-Hearing Dispositions](#) page to connect to the hearing.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the skillful and diligent work of many colleagues in making this possible. Judge Lastreto pioneered use of this technology in the Eastern District and provided invaluable insights into its use. Wayne Blackwelder, Clerk of the Court and Jim Farrell, as well as his team in the Information Technology Department, have spent countless hours making this happen. Finally, I am grateful to our Courtroom Deputies, who cheerfully waded into the muck and mire of a new technology to make it functional. They are Janice Busch, Kamee Thao, Danielle Mobley, Carina Weed, Bethany Soto, Michelle Peterson, and Lindsey Peratis.

In closing, I am mindful that there will be growing pains, missteps, mishaps, and problems. We will try to give each other a full measure of grace as we work through these problems. I will do my best to stay in touch with the bar, trustees, U.S. Trustee and the public about this new method of conducting old business.

Sincerely,



Fredrick E. Clement