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April 23, 2012

Honorable Paul Krekorian  
Chair, Budget and Finance Committee  
c/o Erika Pulst, Legislative Assistant  
Office of the City Clerk

Dear Councilmember Krekorian:

The Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2012-13 was received and has been reviewed. This budget includes various necessary sworn staffing enhancements to the Deployment Plan that will allow us to better serve the public, and provides more funding for the replacement of older fleet and major technology improvements such as the Fire Station Alerting System and Computer-Aided Dispatch System. Following are areas that require further discussion and attention as they impact our ability to meet our core services while considering the ongoing financial realities that have proved very challenging since the global economic crisis began.

**1) Salary Accounts**

Salaries make up 95% (of which 90% is for sworn and 5% for civilian salaries) of the Department's budget. While this proposed budget provides an overall increase, especially in the Constant Staffing Overtime Account, our analysis shows that we will face a shortfall in various salary accounts, including Constant Staffing Overtime, if funding is not increased. These projected account shortages are based on FY 2012-13 staffing level costs and anticipated expenditures.

**Account 1012, Sworn Salaries - \$(TBD) Million**

This account is pending additional analysis. It is the largest account in the Department and pays for sworn salaries.

- Based on Wages and Counts (CAO Form 665-S) for 3,218 Regular Sworn Authorities.
- Provides salary costs for all sworn regular authorities and resolution authorities, and includes base pay and bonuses such as EMT, Paramedic, Education, etc.
- No salary savings rate for this account. This account must be fully funded based on total regular authorities. Savings from any vacant sworn authorities is always anticipated to be transferred to Account 1093 Constant Staffing Overtime Account to pay for a portion of the overtime needed to be paid for vacant field positions.

**Account 1092, Overtime Sworn - \$1 Million**

Based the amount funded, a deficit of approximately \$1 million is projected for FY 12-13. The Department's proposed budget included a request to increase this account by \$1.5 million. This account has been in deficit for several years.

- This account is used to pay for Fire Safety Watch Filming & Other Safety Watches, Emergency Inspections, Arson Staff Emergency Calls, Court on Call, Board or Rights, Arson Staff Emergency Calls, and any major emergencies (brush fires, major catastrophes) which are responded to on overtime.
- This account has been historically under funded. Increases to the accounts have been requested as part of the past five proposed budgets as deficit have been projected every fiscal year.

**Constant Staffing Overtime, Item No. 21:**

**Account 1093, Constant Staffing Overtime - \$7 Million**

Constant Staffing Overtime is paid for all Platoon Duty authorities ensuring that these authorities are staffed 24 hours, 365 days. This is based on the current City's policy; therefore we must cost and fund this account appropriately. It is recommended that these funds be placed in the Unappropriated Balance and funds be transferred into the Fire Department's budget at mid-year or year-end as needed.

- The majority of Fire Department overtime is non-discretionary. Constant staffing overtime is required to maintain minimum staffing levels at every fire station, every day of the year.
- As of FY 2011-12, every day of the year, there are exactly 980 Fire Department members on-duty in the field (or a total of 2,940 platoon duty members).
- Base on the FY 2012-13 Proposed Budget, and with the addition of one Fire Engine, there will be 984 Fire Department members on-duty in the Field (every day of the year, or a total of 2,952 platoon duty members).
- Firefighters working overtime are needed to fill existing vacancies, and member's off-duty sick and injured, on vacation, on holidays, to constantly staff a minimum of 984 positions. This includes all fire stations, the dispatch center, and various platoon duty positions at Supply and Maintenance.

**Reduced Services and Efficiencies**

**2) Elimination of 15 Civilian Positions, Item Nos.11 and 12 (\$1,033,164 Direct Cost):**

This budget includes a reduction of 15 civilian regular authorities from a total 319 regular authorities. This represents a decrease of 5% in support staff throughout the Department and while the anticipated salary savings is approximately \$1 million in direct costs, the cost of further staffing reductions throughout the department far exceed these savings in the short and long-term. Any further reductions to civilian staffing will impact all support functions in the department.

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The Proposed Budget includes the deletion of 12 filled and three vacant civilian positions. The core mission of the LAFD is to preserve life and property, promote public safety and foster economic growth. Additional cuts to the LAFD will have a negative impact on our ability to meet our mission. Civilian positions provide critical support functions that keep our apparatus operational, generate revenue collection, process grants and support the administration of the LAFD. Our civilians make up less than 10% percent of the department's entire workforce and approximately 5% of the salary cost. Our staffing levels have decreased by drastically due to continuous budget cuts, early retirement offers, and transfers to DWP, and to departments that are not affected by furloughs. Hours of production are also decreased by the enforcement of mandatory furloughs. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for our civilian staff to continue to provide the level of service needed without reaching the point of a negative impact to the logistical support functions that are vital to the service provided by first responders. LAFD civilians are dedicated to supporting first responders in many different functions, whether it is the repair and maintenance of vehicles, the follow-up on medical bills, the support to the 911 system, or the myriad of administrative functions performed on a daily basis.

Regular civilian authorities are now at a lower level now than 20 years ago and yet the workload has increased, the overall department's budget has doubled, sworn payroll is extremely complex, revenue has increased tremendously, and systems/technology needs have become greater and more complex as well.

#### History of Civilian Positions

Years	FY	Budget	Civilian Positions		
			Regular	Resolution	Total
	2012-13	513,444,773	315*	0	
	2011-12	472,597,193	319	10	329
5 Years	2006-07	509,409,920	346	44	390
10 Years	2001-02	399,804,330	332		332
15 Years	1996-97	286,106,485	326		326
20 Years	1991-92	231,689,077	337		337

\*Regularizes nine PSD Resolution Authorities and deletes 15 regular authorities.

Civilian staff provides support in maintaining a fleet of over 1,000 emergency vehicles. Due to vacancies and not being able to unfreeze positions, the department has to rely on overtime to make up for position reductions and the workload increase. Further reductions in this area will impact the availability of emergency vehicles. The fleet is aging and requires more maintenance.

The Department's Information Technology staff provides very unique and specialized support. Staff must be available 24/7 in case of emergencies. We cannot afford to jeopardize or compromise the safety of our sworn members and the citizens of Los Angeles by further reductions without taking into account the scale and complexity of the Fire Department's technology and systems support needs. Civilian systems staff

provides technical support to the dispatch system, numerous other essential systems in the department, and support systems needs in City Hall East, and at over 100 Fire Stations and other facilities.

The further reduction of civilian positions will translate to having to detail sworn members to fill necessary gaps, especially in the areas of grants management, potential new revenue evaluation, and data analysis. When civilian positions are not staffed, the LAFD is forced to employ Administrative Duty sworn personnel to perform these tasks. Reductions to the civilian staffing provide critical support and reductions to staffing will ultimately impact support to public safety.

## SERVICE IMPACT

Loss of clerical personnel, total positions targeted: 8 filled positions-- (3 Clerk Typist, 3 Senior Clerk Typist, 2 Secretary): most of the clerical positions at the LAFD support our billing activities and are revenue generating. The LAFD currently generates \$142 Million in revenue. This is done through the use of professional and clerical staff. The elimination of these 8 positions represents a significant loss in staffing for this function. Revenue collection will decrease if these positions are not restored.

Loss of Senior Personnel Analyst, total positions targeted 1 vacant position. The position is currently vacant. This is a working supervisor position that oversees/processes recruit hiring, transfers and promotions. Performing duties of everything from extending job offers to reviewing selection criteria to providing guidance to supervisors in the hiring process, and preparing reports as needed.

Loss of Personnel Analyst II, total positions targeted: 1 filled position. The newly hired Personnel Analyst is the LAFDs Volunteer Coordinator who ensures that volunteers are fingerprinted, their hours are tracked, the programs in which they participate are identified, and timely reports are submitted to the Mayor's office. The work of volunteers is invaluable to the LAFD, loss of the Personnel Analyst position means the duties identified above will not be done as it was not done during the time the position remained vacant.

Loss of Senior Management Analyst II (SMA II), total positions targeted: 1 filled position. This position is responsible for the management of the Grants and Contracts Section. The General Fund contracts are valued at \$5.3 Million, with new contracts that will be required for the replacement of the Computer-Aided Dispatch System (\$12 Million, replacement of the Fire Station Alerting System (\$5 Million), Third-Party review of Resource Deployment (\$750,000). The SMA II works very closely with numerous Department personnel, City Attorney's office staff, and vendors to successfully complete contracts. This position also manages numerous grants and works closely with the staff of the Mayor's office on all Homeland Security grants. By eliminating this position the impact is: lack of supervision of staff tracking the activities and progress of each program; delay in providing financial and technical support to internal/external customers; delay in ensuring reporting/documentation requirements and submitting

timely reports. Such a delay jeopardizes the successful completion of grant programs and timeliness of numerous contractual obligations.

Loss of Systems Analyst II, total positions targeted: 1 vacant position. Loss of this position means that the LAFD would either not be able to or would be delayed in: securing the networks and data from hackers, viruses, and malware, providing technical support to clients which includes troubleshooting of the network, hardware, and software related problems; implementing standards and policies to effectively manage system operations; the Mayor's Green Initiative, consolidating the server project (which is in line with the Fire Chief's goal of improving the Department's infrastructure); supporting the on-line payment server that serves citizens with brush clearance compliance for the Fire Prevention Bureau.

Loss of Management Assistant, total positions targeted: 1 filled position. This position is filled through a Reasonable Accommodation/Interactive Process. Loss of this position means that the Fire Prevention Bureau would have less assistance in the Technical Section ensuring LAFD compliance with State mandates in the Certified Unified Hazardous Materials Program (CUPA), a State funded program; and, a delay in implementing new revenue generating programs for the Construction Services and CUPA.

Loss of Garage Attendant, total positions targeted: 1 vacant position. Loss of this position will decrease the overall number of direct applied labor repair hours and will have a significant negative impact on Emergency Heavy Apparatus out of service rates. Garage Attendants provide a vital service to the maintenance section by freeing up journey level Mechanics to perform the more specialized and highly skilled work of their particular trade. Garage Attendants act as apprentices and helpers in learning a skilled trade thus providing potential future skilled workers to the LAFD.

Loss of Executive Administrative Assistant, total positions targeted: 1 filled position. This position reports to the Fire Administrator who is a civilian member of the Fire Chief's Command Staff and oversees approximately 100 civilian members performing a variety of functions for the LAFD. Loss of the Executive Administrative Assistant would mean there would be no one available to provide direction and clarification on a number of highly confidential and sensitive matters; delay in providing information regarding the Administrative Services Bureau's functions and responsibilities, transmittal of information and instructions to bureau personnel; delay in reviewing correspondence, reports and personnel documents for the Fire Chief's approval. There would be a delay in coordinating the timely completion of the bureau's numerous projects and reports, and in maintaining the calendar of meetings and appointments for the Fire Administrator.

### **New Services**

#### **3) LAX New Construction Inspectors Item No. 28**

This budget item includes transferring of one Inspector I and two Inspector IIs to provide on-site services to LAWA. This item essentially further reduces the number of Inspectors. However, these Inspector authorities are needed to provide services in other areas throughout the City of Los Angeles. Inspector authorities were reduced in FY 2011-12 and this is not an area that the LAFD can continue to cut. It is essential that at least two additional regular Inspector II authorities are added back to meet ongoing workload needs in other areas.

#### **4) Fuel Vehicle Management System Item No. 36**

The Department requested and received \$75,000 in the Proposed Budget for the purchase and installation of the Fuel Vehicle Management System. This amount was based on a five year plan and mainly on the ability of our limited staff to do the work. However, at this point, the City's vendor for the installation of Vehicle Information Transmitters (VIT) is able to do the work. Therefore we are requesting an additional \$350,000 to complete the purchase and installation of VITs in FY 12-13.

### **Other Changes or Adjustments**

#### **5) Replacement of Computer-Aided Dispatch System Item No. 40 and Replacement of the Fire Station Alerting System Item No. 41.**

Combined, these two items provide \$15 million in MICLA funding for the replacement of older critical systems. While funding is also provided for a consultant for the Fire Station Alerting System, it is essential that the City provided dedicated staff for such major and complex projects.

Therefore, I request that a Resolution Authority for one Battalion Chief be added back to our budget. The Department had this authority for several years to assist with the planning of the new Metro Dispatch Center. Since the dispatch center was scheduled to open in FY 11-12, the Department did not ask to continue this authority. However, given the critical nature of these two systems and the direct connection to the dispatch system, it is necessary to retain this authority in FY 2012-13.

In addition, one Sr. Systems Analyst II authority and funding for a consultant in the amount of \$ 200,000 are also requested to provide the necessary resources for these two major endeavors. The key to our success and timely completion of these projects require dedicated staff.

#### **6) Alteration and Improvements**

The Fire Department's Alteration & Improvement list for FY 2012-13 include the following items:

1. Electrical upgrade at various fire stations (\$160,000) – Installation of new electrical outlets for charging front-line firefighting apparatus of field operations and relocation of emergency first responders and equipment, and upgrading insufficient outlets and older facilities.

2. Construction of a new floating dock at Fire Station 110 (\$500,000) – The current floating dock is severely deteriorated, and can no longer be repaired. A new dock would include new safety measures, and have the capability of off-loading multiple victims in the event of a mass casualty incident.

3. Replacing the roofing at various fire stations (\$130,000) – Roofs at various fire stations are deteriorating, and will negatively impact the health and safety of the members at the stations.

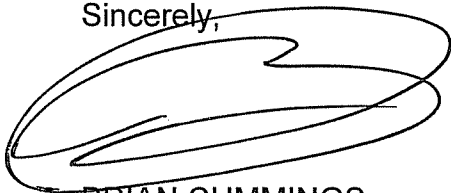
These items were not funded in the Proposed Budget, but require further discussion. While many of the Fire Stations are new, we still have many older Fire Stations that require ongoing maintenance to address safety concerns.

### **Revenue Increases**

The Department is cautiously optimistic about meeting the increased revenue goals. However, I must reiterate that cuts to civilian staffing included in this budget will hamper our ability to achieve this increase from \$140 million in FY 2011-12 to \$170 million in FY 2012-13. Civilian staff in various areas within the Department are essential to achieve our goals.

I recognize that I have included many areas that need to be reviewed and considered for further funding. This letter highlights the priorities in an effort to have a Department that is fully funded and addresses most of the priorities. If the Department receives additional funding, my priorities would be: Civilian Support Staff, Ambulances, Fire Prevention Inspectors, Emergency Incident Technicians, and Fire Resources. My staff and I look forward to discussing these issues in Committee and full Council.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "BRIAN CUMMINGS", enclosed within a large, loopy, hand-drawn oval scribble.

**BRIAN CUMMINGS**  
Fire Chief