

MICHAEL N. FEUER
CITY ATTORNEY

April 18, 2014

The Honorable Budget and Finance Committee
City Council, City of Los Angeles
Room 395, City Hall
Los Angeles, California 90012

Honorable Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information relative to the 2014-15 Proposed Budget for the Office of the City Attorney. Since taking office last July, I have appreciated the opportunity to work collaboratively with the City Council and the Mayor to begin to rebuild the core functions of our office. I am grateful that the Mayor continued to provide for these resources in his 2014-15 Proposed Budget.

I have reassigned positions in my office consistent with our shared focus on prioritizing public safety and quality of life in Los Angeles' neighborhoods. In that spirit, I write to request that you consider funding an additional 10 prosecutors in my office.

Proposition D Enforcement Unit –Request for 5 Additional Prosecutors

As City Attorney, I have focused on meeting the voter mandate that limits the number of medical marijuana businesses in the City. Utilizing resources from throughout the office and in close partnership with LAPD, we have seen success through various enforcement actions, including the filing of criminal charges against hundreds of defendants -- dispensary owners, operators, managers and property owners among them. Over 100 illegal dispensaries have closed since our enforcement of Proposition D began and we have prevailed in more than 20 legal challenges to the law.

Proposition D provided no new resources for my office. Its passage has required me to reassign prosecutors whose primary focus has been addressing nuisance properties that plague our neighborhoods -- locations involving narcotics, gangs and vacant buildings which foster criminal activity. This reassignment of prosecutors diminishes the enforcement of these crucial priorities and is not sustainable.

To aggressively enforce Proposition D, and meet all the expectations of the public and City Council, I request resources to hire 5 new prosecutors for the Proposition D Enforcement Unit.

They would join 2 prosecutors exclusively dedicated to medical marijuana enforcement, intensifying our focus while allowing other staff to return to handling non-Proposition D criminal and abatement actions.

We intend to specialize the work of the unit to address different aspects and challenges of medical marijuana enforcement. With these new resources, we expect the unit to significantly increase our ability to file criminal cases against illegal medical marijuana businesses and undertake additional efforts to close illegal dispensaries. These strategies will include notifications, eviction assistance and civil abatement cases. We anticipate that this new unit, if fully funded with 5 additional prosecutors added to the current 2 prosecutors, will close approximately 380 illegal medical marijuana businesses over the next 18 months.

Expand the Neighborhood Prosecutor Program – Request for 5 Additional Prosecutors

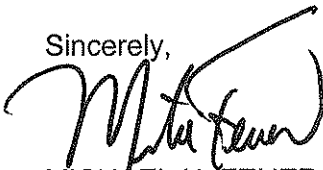
The Neighborhood Prosecutor Program is well known for tackling quality of life concerns in communities, working hand-in-hand with neighborhood councils, homeowners' groups, educators, businesses and LAPD to proactively identify and solve public safety problems. As a result of a neighborhood prosecutor's familiarity with an area and dialogue with local leaders, neighborhood prosecutors are in a unique position to identify and address local public safety concerns. These efforts range from transient issues to nuisance businesses to residential property issues.

With the City Council and Mayor's support, we have been able to double the number of neighborhood prosecutors to 16. The addition of 5 new prosecutors would enable my office to assign a dedicated neighborhood prosecutor to each of LAPD's 21 divisions, allowing the program to serve the entire City.

Thank you for considering this request. Finally, it is important to note that the Proposed Budget does not fund Outside Counsel or Liability Claims at the levels we recommend. This may result in a mid-year request for funding.

I look forward to our continued partnership on behalf of the residents of the City. My staff and I are available to provide any additional information needed as you move forward.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL N. FEUER
City Attorney

cc: Honorable Members of the City Council
Honorable Eric Garcetti, Mayor
Gerry Miller, Chief Legislative Analyst
Miguel Santana, City Administrative Officer