

MICHAEL N. FEUER
CITY ATTORNEY

April 21, 2021

Honorable Members
Budget and Finance Committee
City Hall
Los Angeles, CA
via Novus

Honorable Members:

This year has been unlike any other. Our collective struggles have challenged us in ways we have never encountered and could never have imagined. Our attorneys and staff have risen to these challenges with professionalism and grit. They have remained focused on serving the City and its residents by delivering the best legal services possible to City leadership and departments as well as fulfilling our role in enhancing public safety.

They have worked with far fewer resources than ever before in less than optimal conditions. Yet, they have powered through, on the promise of a “light at the end of the tunnel” – the end of the pandemic and reinforcements arriving soon, to relieve the enormous workload and stress. As our city recovers, physically, emotionally and financially, the budget before you allows us to begin building back our team, which has been decimated by the impacts of financial shortfalls, retirements and the hard hiring freeze that has left us with a near 12 percent vacancy rate.

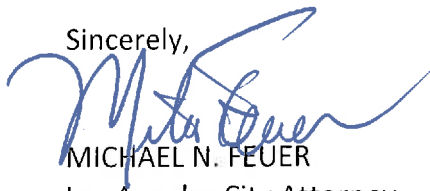
Over the past year, and likely in the foreseeable future, our workload has increased in many key areas placing extraordinary demands on the staff that remains. It is a pace that cannot be sustained. This increased workload has impacted all aspects of our office – lawsuits we are called upon to defend as well as those we have engaged in affirmatively to protect residents against fraud and unfair business practices; contracts and transactional documents we draft, including expedited leases to shelter the homeless and contracts to re-imagine public safety and enhance homelessness prevention; and advice our staff provides on a range of issues, from day-to-day operations to some of the most critical and complex issues facing the City. Our prosecutors are working to bring justice to and protect victims of crime, including an increasing number of perpetrators of family violence, while concurrently working to further incorporate justice reform and alternatives to prosecution into our criminal practice.

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Thankfully, the Mayor's budget ends the hiring freeze and provides salary funding that allows us to cover existing staff costs and start hiring a small number of the litigators, prosecutors, transactional attorneys and support staff that are critically needed. While this is a much-needed start, additional support would allow for a more robust approach to hiring - rebuilding and reinforcing our team in critical areas.

We are appreciative of your previous support and look forward to continuing our partnership to ensure our city's recovery and growth.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL N. FEUER
Los Angeles City Attorney

cc: Richard Llewellyn, City Administrative Officer
Sharon Tso, Chief Legislative Analyst