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e-mail: Oaklanders@makeoaklandbetternow.org

January 30, 2011

Via E-Mail

Honorable Jean Quan, Mayor  
City of Oakland  
Oakland City Hall  
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza  
Oakland, CA 94612  
Larry Reid, President  
Oakland City Council  
Nancy Nadel  
Oakland City Council  
Rebecca Kaplan  
Oakland City Council  
Libby Schaaf  
Oakland City Council

Sergeant Dominique Arotzarena  
President  
Oakland Police Officers Association  
555 5th Street  
Oakland, CA 94607-3500  
Jane Brunner  
Oakland City Council  
Patricia Kernighan  
Oakland City Council  
Ignacio De La Fuente  
Oakland City Council  
Desley Brooks  
Oakland City Council

**Re: Oakland Public Safety**

Dear Mayor Quan, Sergeant Arotzarena and Members of the City Council:

Make Oakland Better Now! is a citizen advocacy group dedicated to improving public safety, public works and accountability.

We, the board members and board nominees of Make Oakland Better Now!, write to urge the City and the Oakland Police Officers Association to begin a new approach to negotiations using a mutually-respected third-party mediator to assist with resolving their on-going disagreements. For too long these disputes have resulted in the withering away of an already marginally-staffed police department. Each day Oakland's Police Department becomes less able to provide the police patrols and crime investigations its citizens need.

Make Oakland Better Now! is well aware of the City's ongoing financial crisis; we also realize that this financial crisis will not end any time soon. We understand that the steps we are proposing will require the City to make yet more difficult budget choices. However, we are certain that the City and the Association can work together to find cost-effective ways to provide adequate police services, preventing a decrease in public safety that would surely be catastrophic.

We believe it is essential for the City and the Association to take the following steps:

- We urge Oakland to immediately and unilaterally hire back 30 officers. The extra cost will be short term, as the current high attrition rate will bring the City to break-even in three to six months.

Honorable Jean Quan, Mayor  
Sgt. Domenic Arotzarena  
Members of the City Council  
Page 2

- We urge the City to make enhanced policing its highest priority for seeking grants and other outside funding. While outside funding is never a permanent solution, it is presently an essential part of the short-term fix. City government should show a strong commitment to seeking any available help from the United States Department of Justice and other sources.
- We urge Oakland to fund police academies on an ongoing, annual basis. Failure to do so will ensure that the department continues to shrink indefinitely.
- We urge the Association and the City to begin confidential negotiations with a neutral, mutually trusted retired judge or other third-party mediator. We also propose that the parties be prepared to negotiate every conceivable issue, not just pension contributions. For negotiations to succeed, both parties must start the process without predetermined positions about what issues are and are not on the table.
- Above all, we urge the City and the Association to keep their negotiations, and their personal views about one another, confidential. The citizens of Oakland need to know that their elected officials and sworn police officers are working together to keep Oakland safe.

Make Oakland Better Now! believes that the seemingly intractable dispute between the City and its sworn officers can be resolved by negotiators acting in good faith, using a third-party mediator and working collaboratively to find solutions. A cooperative effort between the City and the Police Officers' Association's leadership would surely be the most important and heartening local political accomplishment of 2011.

Thank you for your attention and for all of the steps you can take to make this a better, safer Oakland.

Sincerely,



Sara Wood-kraft  
Joseph S. Sulman



Jim Gladman

Nathan Stalman

Honorable Jean Quan, Mayor  
Sgt. Domenic Arotzarena  
Members of the City Council  
Page 3

This letter is signed by the following Make Oakland Better Now! board members and incoming board members:

Michael Ferro, Nicholas Heidorn, Frank Castro, Sara Wood-Kraft, Joseph Tuman, Bruce Nye, Jim Blachman, Nathan Stalnaker

cc: Chief Anthony Batts