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CALIFORNIA

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ARLETA NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

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ARLETA NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Community Impact Statement

October 20, 2020

RE: Council File 20-0190 : ***In Support of the safety of Park Rangers***

Dear Councilmembers:

We write to you to inform that the Arleta Neighborhood Council supports Councilmember Joe Buscaino's motion so that park rangers can "have the full ability to utilize all law enforcement tools and equipment to ensure the safety and security of the public under all circumstances" including their own safety. Park rangers are law enforcement first responders at parks and need to have the use of a firearm, *along with bodycameras*, for the following reasons:

- Nighttime patrol is particularly more dangerous as park rangers can encounter armed transients at any given time. Combative homeless people/people with substance abuse addictions present a threat to the public and all municipal personnel—particularly in remote areas of a park as some homeless can be in possession of firearms or even explosives.
- Given California laws that have reduced some felonies to misdemeanors and released formerly imprisoned people without a safety net for themselves or protections for law-abiding members of the public, (The Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act (Proposition 47 (2014))¹, and the early prison release program (Assembly Bill 109 (2011))², respectively, have allowed for community parks to be under siege as they are frequently lonely throughout the day/night where some of them have become stations of criminal activity.
- The Park Ranger Division is composed of 22 park rangers and the division has been experiencing tremendous attrition besides facing unsafe conditions in remote and desolate areas of a park.
- Twenty-two park rangers for the 440 parks within Recreation and Parks' purview is completely insufficient and unacceptable.
- Homeless have been seen camping at Branford Recreation Center and are currently a stationary entity at Tobias Park in Panorama City.
- Law enforcement personnel that encounter members of the public in the field—aside from code enforcement agents inspecting structures for adherence to building codes and where the possibility of an altercation with a property owner or representative is highly unlikely—are at a disadvantage

¹ http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&division=7.&title=1.&part=&chapter=33.&article=

² http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/11-12/bill/asm/ab_0101-0150/ab_109_bill_20110404_chaptered.pdf

when they have no firearms and are presented with people who do not want to be cited for their disregard of municipal ordinances and/or have to be detained for other transgressions of the law. Park rangers are law enforcement personnel and have to be prepared for the escalation of situations as they confront all members of the public.

- Given that park rangers have already completed the California Peace Officer Standards and Training program they are ready and must be equipped with a firearm to protect themselves and park patrons.

Given the aforementioned, and in solidarity with Foothill-Trails District NC, Tarzana NC, and the Lake Hollywood Homeowners Association, the Arleta Neighborhood Council supports Council File 20-0190.

Respectfully,

The Arleta Neighborhood Council