



Nov. 20, 2017

Via electronic mail only

Mayor Jesse Arreguin
 Councilmember Linda Maio
 Councilmember Cheryl Davila
 Councilmember Ben Bartlett
 Councilmember Kate Harrison
 Councilmember Sophie Hahn
 Councilmember Susan Wengraf
 Councilmember Kriss Worthington

Councilmember Lori Droste
Berkeley City Council
2180 Milvia Street
Berkeley, CA 94704

Re: Community Support for the Surveillance and Community Safety Ordinance

Dear Berkeley City Council,

The undersigned coalition urges the Berkeley City Council to approve the Surveillance and Community Safety Ordinance. This coalition represents diverse Berkeley residents who are concerned with law enforcement's secretive and unaccountable use of technologies that can facilitate discriminatory policing and undermine public safety goals. This ordinance provides the Berkeley public with the information and opportunity to participate in important decisions about surveillance technology. We urge you to approve it without delay.

This Ordinance is the result of a robust and open debate among the City's residents, civil society organizations, and government stakeholders. This debate began with robust conversation in the Police Review Commission, and it has continued through the Peace and Justice Commission and Disaster and Fire Safety Commission, which has held hearings on the language and solicited the input of both community members and law enforcement. As a result, this Ordinance represents the civil rights and civil liberties values of Berkeley. The City Council now has the opportunity to enshrine these values into local law.

The Ordinance is straightforward: it requires essential transparency, accountability, and oversight for all surveillance technology proposals, and it ensures the public has the opportunity to learn about the civil rights and civil liberties impact of surveillance technologies before local officials acquire them. If acquired, technologies must be reexamined to ensure any benefits outweigh the civil liberties and civil rights costs. Recent amendments to the Ordinance ensure that the City will be able to address new surveillance technologies and that emergency use of such technologies will be strictly limited and subject to oversight.

As the Trump Administration signals that it will focus its surveillance and enforcement powers on immigrants and Muslim Americans, local leaders have a special responsibility to enact strong measures that protect vulnerable residents from suspicionless monitoring and the creation of databases exploitable for discriminatory ends.

This Ordinance helps protect the civil liberties and civil rights of all Berkeley residents and is the culmination of a year-long debate. We urge the City Council to adopt it without delay.

Sincerely,

ACLU of Northern California
American Friends Service Committee

Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus
Block By Block Organizing Network
CAIR California
Center for Media Justice
Coalition for Police Accountability
Code Pink
Color of Change
Courage Campaign
Courage to Resist
Defending Dissent
Electronic Frontier Foundation
Ella Baker Center for Human Rights
Forward Together
Green Party of Alameda County
Greenlining Institute
Media Alliance
National Lawyers Guild - Committee on Democratic Communications
Oakland Privacy
Off Now
Peninsula Peace and Justice
Restore the 4th
Tenth Amendment Center
TURN – The Utilities Reform Network
Veterans for Peace East Bay
War Resisters League West
Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club