

OFFICE OF
CONTROLLER

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CONTROLLER

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November 3, 2008

Arif Alikhan; Deputy Mayor
Office of Homeland Security and Public Safety
Office of the Mayor
200 N. Spring Street, Mezzanine
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Alikhan:

**SUBJECT: EVALUATION OF THE MAYOR'S OFFICE RESPONSE TO THE
CONTROLLER'S PERFORMANCE AUDIT OF THE CITY OF LOS
ANGELES' EMERGENCY PLANNING EFFORTS AND CITYWIDE
DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

My Audit Division received your September 30, 2008, response to the "Performance Audit of the City of Los Angeles' Emergency Planning Efforts and Citywide Disaster Preparedness." I appreciate your Office's continued commitment to further enhance the City's efforts to protect the public and ensure that Los Angeles and its residents are prepared to respond to and recover from any natural or man-made emergency or disaster.

Your proposed actions and planned implementation dates are accepted with the following comments.

Recommendations 6.3-6.8 (External Collaborations)

Your response indicates that the proposed actions to improve the City's collaboration with other government agencies, private non-profit organizations and the public sector will be initiated by a Mayoral Directive that will be released soon. Full implementation of all action plan components is planned for January 2010. The audit recognized the City's efforts to collaborate and partner with others but identified that a more structured and systematic approach was needed to avoid overlapping and duplicating efforts in areas such as community preparedness and public education. With the City facing financial constraints, it is imperative that the City's resources be maximized and used

Arif Alikhan, Deputy Mayor
November 3, 2008
Page 2 of 3

effectively. I encourage you to ensure the efforts to improve partnerships with external entities move forward as quickly as possible to ensure the public's needs will be adequately met prior to, during, and after a major emergency.

Recommendations 7.3-7.5 (City's Grants Policies)

These recommendations were addressed to the City Council and your response indicates that your Office agrees and supports the recommendations to streamline the City's processes to review, accept and expend grant awards. I am pleased that you also see the opportunity for the City to revisit the policy and oversight roles to ensure that grant funds are used appropriately and within the time constraints established by the grantors. These recommendations are aligned with recommendations made in my Performance Audit of the City's Grant Seeking and Administration Processes issued in December 2007. I believe your Office, working with the Offices of the City Administrative Officer and Chief Legislative Analyst, can assist the City Council in developing a course of action to address how the City's administrative policies over grants can be revised to maintain adequate controls while making the processes efficient.

Recommendation 8.3 (Financial Management Efficiency)

Your response states that the disbursement reviews that my Office conducts provide sufficient evaluation of the financial management activities your staff performs over grant funds. These types of reviews are not meant to assess operational effectiveness and efficiency but compliance with City policies for processing payments. Although the audit noted that there are some advantages to linking programmatic and financial management activities, the report also recognized a concern about grant funds for emergency planning and disaster preparedness (UASI and SHSGP) being used timely. As a result, it was recommended that your Office should define specific outcome measurements to enable a continuous monitoring of the financial management activities to ensure it was still appropriate to keep this function within the Mayor's Office.

To meet the intent of the recommendation, I encourage your Office to develop specific performance measurements to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the fiscal management activities over the UASI and SHSGP grant funds.

Recommendations 11.1 and 11.2 (National Peer Review)

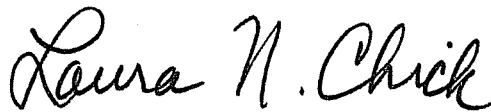
In your response, you state that full implementation of the detailed action plans to address the National Peer Review results (a self-assessment of emergency operations plans) will be completed by June 2010. In some cases, the deficiencies noted in the self-assessment will be addressed by other recommendations and proposed action

Arif Alikhan, Deputy Mayor
November 3, 2008
Page 3 of 3

plans (e.g., improving the process for After Action Reports). However, one example where improved planning was needed involved mass evacuation plans. While I recognize the need to approach implementation plans in a thoughtful manner, this must be balanced with ensuring risks are mitigated timely. The City's plans to address identified deficiencies with its emergency operations plans should ensure that critical areas needing improvement are prioritized so that the associated risks are mitigated without delay.

As part of my office's follow-up program, we will request a status report in approximately six months. The objective of the follow-up program is to ensure that the audit recommendations have been properly addressed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura N. Chick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

LAURA N. CHICK
City Controller

cc: Honorable Members of the City Council
James G. Featherstone, General Manager, EMD
Douglas Barry, Chief, LAFD
William J. Bratton, Chief, LAPD