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City Controller Kenneth Mejia Releases Performance Audit of LAPD's Compliance with Military Equipment State Law AB 481, Urges City Council to Reject the Next LAPD Military Equipment Policy Until it Fully Complies with AB 481

Audit Findings Show that the LAPD's Current AB 481 Use Policy & Report Fail to Fully Comply with AB 481's Specific Requirements

LOS ANGELES – Los Angeles City Controller Kenneth Mejia today released a performance audit of the Los Angeles Police Department's (LAPD) compliance with California state law AB 481, whose purpose is to bring public oversight to the funding, acquisition and use of military equipment by law enforcement agencies. The audit evaluated the LAPD's compliance with AB 481, its process for developing AB 481 reports, and how its efforts compare to other agencies throughout California.

Full audit:
bit.ly/ab481

The audit shows significant areas of concern with the LAPD's current AB 481 policy, including lack of full compliance with AB 481's military equipment use policy and report requirements.

For the military equipment use policy requirements, the audit found that the LAPD did not fully meet five of eleven requirements and that it fully met the remaining requirements. For example, the LAPD's published military equipment use policy failed to provide manufacturer product descriptions, to sufficiently detail information about military equipment LAPD intended to procure, or to provide information about the estimated annual maintenance costs for some of its military equipment.

For the military equipment report requirements, the audit found that the LAPD fully failed to meet two of the eight requirements, partially met three requirements, and fully met three requirements. Among the most concerning findings were that the LAPD's report is difficult for the general public to locate and that the LAPD's outreach and education efforts regarding military equipment are limited. Additionally, because of the decentralized nature of LAPD's bureaus and divisions, the self-reporting of military equipment information is also decentralized leading to the LAPD lacking sufficient controls and safeguards to ensure that information they published in AB 481 reports is accurate. Furthermore, unlike other California law enforcement agencies that are providing necessary and valuable transparency to their communities, the audit found that the LAPD's report does not disclose specific information about the use of military equipment (such as specific dates on when and why military equipment was used).

The audit makes recommendations for (1) ensuring full compliance with AB 481, (2) boosting transparency into the use of military equipment (3) reducing the risk of reporting inaccuracies related to the LAPD's military equipment and (4) improving the public's ability to engage with and impact the LAPD's military equipment policies.

Controller Mejia said, "With this audit, members of the public and policy makers are empowered to demand the public oversight and transparency required by law and by our City's values.

"While we are encouraged by the LAPD's assurances that it has and will further implement the recommendations in the audit, those assurances alone fail to satisfy the requirements of AB 481. Therefore, due to the LAPD's current military equipment use policy and report not being in full compliance with AB 481, especially within the context of deadly military equipment used on Angelenos, and until significant implementations by the LAPD of the recommendations in our audit are made to reach full compliance, the City Council should reject the next iteration of LAPD's Military Equipment Policy.

"While AB 481 contains the legal minimums that a law enforcement agency must meet regarding military equipment, these minimums do not and should not foreclose the higher level of transparency and accountability the City of Los Angeles deserves."

The LAPD's use of military equipment has caused harm to City residents, leading to serious injury and to millions of dollars each year in liability claims. For example, the LAPD's use of military equipment, including less-lethal projectile launchers, against protestors has led to serious injuries and multimillion dollar jury awards and settlements, including:

- \$3.75 million: Awarded by a jury to an individual who was shot twice by military projectiles during a protest;
- \$1.5 million: City settlement with an individual who suffered testicular trauma when LAPD shot them in the groin with a 40-millimeter launcher reportedly causing one of their testicles to explode and require immediate surgery; and
- \$1.25 million: City settlement with a Marine Corps service member who suffered a traumatic brain injury and brain bleeding when LAPD shot them in the head with a beanbag shotgun during a protest.

The Controller's Office conducted the performance audit in response to calls from community members and organizations who requested more information about the LAPD's military equipment use policy and reporting.

Audits and Assessments by City Controller Kenneth Mejia's Office

Completed:

- [LAPD Military Equipment](#)
- [LAPD Helicopters](#)

- [Interim Housing](#)

In progress:

- TAHO
- Unarmed Response
- Pathways to Permanent Housing
- Affordable Housing Efforts
- Inside Safe