



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LA City Controller Kenneth Mejia Seeks to Enforce Subpoena Issued to City Vendor Urban Alchemy

City Attorney Blocking Controller's Charter-mandated Authority to Hold Urban Alchemy Accountable

LOS ANGELES – Earlier this year, the Office of Los Angeles City Controller Kenneth Mejia launched an investigation into Urban Alchemy, a vendor who receives City dollars to run climate stations within the City. The investigation was launched after an Urban Alchemy employee sprayed water towards an unhoused resident on a cold winter night.

Los Angeles City Charter Section 262 gives the Controller's Office the authority to inspect City-paid services from vendors. It is the Controller's duty to ensure that the services paid for by taxpayers abide by relevant contracts and to inspect the quality of services paid for by the City.

The Controller's investigation of Urban Alchemy is aimed at ensuring that the services paid for by City funds are in keeping with the contractual assurances made by Urban Alchemy and the values of the people of the City.

In support of the inspection, the Controller requested necessary information from Urban Alchemy several times. After months of Urban Alchemy refusing to voluntarily provide the requested records, the Controller issued a subpoena to Urban Alchemy in March. Urban Alchemy is fighting the subpoena in court.

The City Attorney has indicated that her Office will not adequately defend the subpoena in court and will instead take a position that undermines and contravenes the Charter authority granted to the Controller's Office. The City Attorney intends to argue a position averse to the City Charter, is refusing to properly defend the Controller's subpoena, and is blocking the Controller's efforts to hold Urban Alchemy accountable.

The City of Los Angeles and the public are entitled to and deserve a Controller's Office that can bring the Charter-mandated transparency and accountability that our inspection seeks.