County of Los Angeles
Sheriff's Department Headquarters
4700 Ramona Boulevard
Monterey Park, California 91754-2169

LEROY D. BACA, SHERIFF

August 10, 2010

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

AUTHORIZE THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT TO PURCHASE A HIGH ALTITUDE MICROWAVE VIDEO DOWNLINK AND LONG RANGE HIGH DEFINITION VIDEO CAMERA SYSTEM (ALL DISTRICTS) (3 VOTES)

SUBJECT

The recommended action will allow the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Department) to have high altitude aerial microwave video downlink transmission capabilities to conduct critical infrastructure and wildfire damage assessment, command and control operations, and will enhance high profile investigations.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

Authorize the Los Angeles County's (County) purchasing agent to proceed with the solicitation and acquisition of a complete aerial microwave video downlink and high definition stabilized video camera system (System).

This purchase exceeds the $250,000 fixed asset threshold established by you Board and requires your approval to move forward with the solicitation and acquisition process.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Microwave video downlink provides critical video intelligence in support of law enforcement operations. This technology provides real-time aerial images of unfolding tactical situations to command staff on the ground, thus enhancing their decision

making and response capabilities. Additionally, this technology will save lives and property while enhancing risk management efforts.

The Department has no video downlink capability at the present time. Two airplanes and one helicopter will be outfitted with video downlink transmission equipment. This equipment will enable the transmission of video signals from aerial platforms to four mobile video receive sites which will be installed in vehicles. This will allow for images to be viewed by field supervisors and investigators charged with making critical and timely decisions. Video signals will be capable of being received at the Department's mobile command centers, where Department commanders and managers are responsible for deploying assets and personnel. The System will increase the Department's high altitude surveillance capabilities, affording investigators the ability to identify subjects while avoiding detection and increasing the probability of apprehension. This purchase includes two high definition long range stabilized video cameras. Currently, the Department has one such camera which requires lens, component, and software upgrades, which will be accomplished during this System purchase.

Background

The Department's Aero Bureau has been unable to provide aerial images for several high profile incidents, due to the absence of microwave video downlink capabilities. The June 2010 Los Angeles Lakers championship celebration is one such incident where this technology would have been utilized and made a major impact on our law enforcement efforts. During this event, the Department had to rely on images provided by the Pasadena Police Department, which has video downlink-equipped aircraft. Other recent instances where this technology would have been invaluable included the West Hollywood Proposition 8 march and demonstration in May 2009, and the June 2009 Los Angeles Lakers championship celebration. In addition to its tactical applications, video downlink technology is also critical to the Department's response to natural and manmade disasters. Two incidents which would have benefited from the use of this technology were the Station Fire in August and September 2009 and the Chatsworth Metrolink crash in September 2008.

Another major benefit of this System will be the sharing of aerial images between County agencies. The Department's Aero Bureau has agreed to provide aerial downlink images to the County Fire Department during future wildfires and disasters. The Department would provide the necessary video feed to the Fire Department's mobile command center, as well as the Department's Incident Management Teams (IMT). This will enable both Departments the information necessary to plan their responses and will allow the Fire Department's aerial assets to focus solely on firefighting, water dropping, and rescue operations.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The recommendations are consistent with the County's Strategic Plan Goal 5, Public Safety, as these recommendations support our public safety mission.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

The funding for this System will come from an asset forfeiture request initiated by the Department's Narcotics Bureau. The funding approved for the acquisition is $2,635,635.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

On October 16, 2001 your Board adopted a policy whereby departments must obtain Board approval to purchase equipment with a unit cost of $250,000 or greater prior to submitting their requisitions for purchasing.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

This action will give the Department the capability to provide real time situational awareness to IMT during disaster/critical infrastructure and wildfire damage assessment operations. This System will also be used during civil disobedience demonstrations and protests, and will greatly enhance the Department's risk management efforts during such operations. Additionally, this System will significantly augment the investigative efforts of the Department's Major Narcotics Violators Sections, as well as investigations involving violent and predatory criminals which threaten the public's safety. In the event of a terrorist attack in greater Los Angeles County, this technology will afford the Department and Federal authorities the ability to have access to live video feeds during command and control operations.

CONTRACTING PROCESS

This is a commodity purchase under the statutory authority of the County purchasing agent. The purchase will be requisitioned through and accomplished by the purchasing agent in accordance with the County's purchasing policies and procedures.

CONCLUSION

Upon approval by the Board, please return two adopted copies of this letter to the Department's Administrative Services Division.

Sincerely,

LEROY D. BACA
SHERIFF

Reviewed by:

RICHARD SANCHEZ
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER