



October 27, 2025

Chairperson Charlene Wang  
Oakland City Council  
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, 2nd Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612

**Re: SUPPORT for File # 26-0189 - OPD Community Safety Camera System and Flock Safety Contract**

Dear Chairperson Wang and Members of the Oakland City Council Public Safety Committee,

On behalf of the Bay Area Council, representing more than 370 of the region's largest employers, I am writing in strong support of File # 26-0189 – Oakland Police Department (OPD) Community Safety Camera System and Flock Safety Contract. Approval of the Flock Safety Contract is an essential step toward improving safety, restoring confidence, and rebuilding Oakland's economy.

For 80 years, the Bay Area Council has engaged business and civic-minded leaders to solve the most challenging regional issues to ensure the Bay Area is the most innovative, sustainable, inclusive, and globally competitive region for everyone who lives here. Nowhere is that collaboration more needed right now than in Oakland, where the city's recovery depends on restoring public safety. As such, the Bay Area Council built a strong coalition of over 100 employers who are based in or otherwise do business in Oakland to advocate for public safety improvements in the city.

Earlier this year, the Bay Area Council's Economic Institute released a [report](#) showing the direct link between safety and economic vitality in Oakland, along with ten data-driven recommendations for stabilizing and growing its economy. One key recommendation is the importance of OPD leveraging technology as a force multiplier, particularly in light of significant sworn staffing challenges.

OPD remains well below recommended staffing levels. Current staffing levels are at 636 sworn officers, with a current sworn operational strength of 511. A staffing study released this June found that OPD needs a baseline of 877 sworn officers to meet workload and service demands. With 66 serious crimes per officer in 2023, OPD faces more than double the per officer caseload of the average city in California. The effects are felt citywide: slower response times, increased crime and negative perceptions of safety, and less investment and spending in Oakland.

A 2025 poll conducted by EMC Research in partnership with the Bay Area Council found that voters are significantly changing their spending patterns due to crime: 61% of East Bay and Oakland voters have reduced the amount they dine at Oakland sit-down restaurants; and 55%

have cut attending live entertainment, concerts, and sporting events – all of which is primarily due to crime. Of all poll respondents who said they are patronizing Oakland businesses less in recent years, 72% said public safety concerns have played a role in their decreased spending in Oakland. A majority of Oakland residents said they leave Oakland to shop in nearby cities because it feels safer, and 64% of voters who work in downtown Oakland said crime and safety concerns factor into how often they work in person. The same survey found that a clear majority said they would be more likely to visit downtown if there were more visible security cameras in business corridors.

Camera networks have become one of the most effective crime-fighting tools, particularly in cities facing limited police staffing. Oakland's own Real-Time Operations Center has shown that technology like Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR) helps officers identify suspects faster, connect cases, and provide prosecutors with stronger evidence. These systems both deter crime and make it possible to hold repeat offenders accountable, helping keep momentum toward a safer and more vibrant city.

Flock Safety's ALPR cameras are a proven tool in identifying stolen vehicles, tracking suspects in violent crimes, and recovering lost or stolen property. Flock Safety's ALPR system is responsible for 10% of arrests and has contributed to an 11% increase in clearance rates for violent crimes. It is one of the most effective crime-fighting technologies that the Oakland Police Department has.

Moreover, cities across the region, including San Francisco, Berkeley, San Leandro, Alameda, and Piedmont, have deployed Flock Safety cameras with positive results. Oakland deserves equal access to the same evidence-based tools that support effective policing. Approving this contract will allow OPD to extend its investigative reach, operate more efficiently, and continue advancing its commitment to community safety.

It is for these reasons that the Bay Area Council requests your support of the OPD Community Safety Camera System and Flock Safety Contract. Should you have any questions or comments regarding this position, please contact Laura Hill, Vice President of Public Policy, at [Lhill@bayareacouncil.org](mailto:Lhill@bayareacouncil.org). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



**Jim Wunderman**  
President and CEO  
Bay Area Council

cc: Members of the Oakland City Council Public Safety Committee