



September 21, 2022

Stephanie Wiggins, Chief Executive Officer
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, California 90012-2952
Via email to WigginsS@metro.net

Subject: Concern about Retaliatory Action from LA County Sheriff's Department

Dear CEO Wiggins,

A safe, reliable, and equitable Metro is a goal shared by Metro, ACT-LA's broad coalition, other community-based organizations (CBOs), and transit riders. In recent years, new strategies to improve safety have been a focus of the agency, thanks to joint efforts by the Board, the Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC), riders, and CBOs. In order for Metro to continue working towards a safe and secure transit system, it must stop contracting with the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department.

The recent searches and seizures at the homes of Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, Civilian Oversight Committee member Patti Giggans, and Metro headquarters make clear that the Sheriff's Department is an unsuitable public safety partner. These retaliatory actions against officials who have called for the Sheriff's resignation are egregious, and clear conflicts of interest. We agree with Metro Board member Mike Bonin's assessment that Sheriff Villanueva is "scared of civilian oversight, defies civilian oversight, and is abusing his power to get revenge on those who exercise civilian oversight."

In addition to last week's actions, the Sheriff's Department is under scrutiny and investigation for its ongoing protection of deputy gangs, harassment of victims' families, reinstatement of officers accused of domestic violence, deputy-driven abuse in jails, and overall culture of violence and lawlessness. The Sheriff has also repeatedly attacked Metro and its community partners, including publicly shaming PSAC members. The Department attempted to become the only contracted law enforcement agency by threatening to cancel services required under the contract unless provided with a larger

amount of funds, even larger than the \$291 million granted since 2017.¹ These are not the actions of a trustworthy public safety partner.

The Sheriff Department has a flagrant disregard for LA County's safety. The Sheriff's Department has no place on Metro, and should not be considered for a contract. We ask that Metro not consider any bid the Sheriff's Department makes for services. Rather, consistent with long-running demands of community-based organizations throughout Los Angeles, Metro should urgently expand and deepen its commitment to the non-law enforcement, care-first safety strategies advocated by ACT-LA² and PSAC³.

Together, we can achieve a safe and welcoming Metro for all.

Alliance for Community Transit - Los Angeles (ACT-LA)

CC:

- Metro Board of Directors
- Debra Avila, Chief Vendor/Contract Management Officer
- Antonio Monreal, Principal Contract Administrator

¹<https://www.cbsnews.com/losangeles/news/la-sheriff-says-deputies-will-no-longer-patrol-metro-transit-without-sole-authority/>.

² <https://www.act-la.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Metro-as-a-Sanctuary-ACT-LA.pdf>

³ <https://www.catalystcalifornia.org/blog/la-metro-public-safety-advisory-committee-update>