

REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

DATE: JUNE 28, 2023

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: NATHAN HAMBURGER, CITY MANAGER

BY: RAMIRO ADEVA, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON INVOLUNTARY DEPUTY ROTATION PLAN AND CONSIDER APPROVAL OF A LETTER OF CONCERN REGARDING THE INVOLUNTARY DEPUTY ROTATION PLAN AS OUTLINED IN THE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SPECIAL COUNSEL TO THE SHERIFF CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT COMMISSION REGARDING DEPUTY GANGS AND DEPUTY CLIQUES IN THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

On April 26, 2023, the City Council considered sending a Letter of Opposition to the involuntary deputy rotation plan as outlined in the report and recommendations of the special counsel to the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission (COC) regarding deputy gangs/cliques in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

The Council did not direct staff at that time to send the Letter of Opposition drafted by the Council of Governments, but rather to re-draft the letter to include language that addresses concerns raised by the Council, and to do additional research on questions and concerns raised.

One of those questions was about the Board of Supervisors (BOS) decision that was made on March 7, 2023, wherein they voted to adopt the 27 recommendations and made a request to Sheriff Luna to also review, adopt, and implement the COC's 27 recommendations. The question was whether the BOS' decision was a directive to Sheriff Luna to implement all 27 recommendations. After speaking with Supervisor Horvath's office, staff was informed the BOS has already taken their final action on this item, and the recommendations are now in Sheriff Luna's department, where he has the authority to use his sole judgment on which recommendations will be implemented.

Similarly, the question was raised on how Sheriff Luna intended to handle this situation. His response to staff aligned with that of Supervisor Horvath's office, in that the final decision on which recommendations are implemented lies with him, and that he is taking careful consideration of each recommendation made in the COC report.

Staff also reached out to Captain Seetoo at the Malibu-Lost Hills Sheriff's station to receive the latest update on the progress of this particular recommendation. Staff was

told the Sheriff received a lot of letters from contract cities opposing the involuntary rotation of deputies, and though the general sentiment is that this recommendation will not be moving forward anytime soon, there still is no definitive answer on whether the Sheriff intends to implement it or not at some future date.

At the direction of the Council, staff also re-drafted the original Letter of Opposition and are now proposing, based on the feedback and concerns raised at the April 26, 2023 meeting, that a Letter of Concern be submitted, instead of a Letter of Opposition. Rather than being an outright opposition to the recommendation for involuntary deputy rotations, the attached letter would instead be aimed at ensuring Sheriff Luna is aware of the Council's concerns with the proposed deputy rotation program as currently written, specifically noting among other things, the need to find a solution that is not a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

Therefore, staff is seeking direction from the City Council on the attached draft Letter of Concern to the involuntary deputy rotation program.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff respectfully recommends the Council consider the following and direct staff to either:

1. Approve sending the attached Letter of Concern to Sheriff Luna, along with any desired revisions from the Council; or
2. Not send any letter to Sheriff Luna

Attachment: Letter of Concern



"Gateway to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area"

June 29, 2023

Honorable Robert Luna, Sheriff
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
Hall of Justice
211 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Letter of Concern to Involuntary Rotating Deputies to Other Stations Every 5 Years

Dear Sheriff Luna,

On behalf of the City of Agoura Hills, I am writing to express our concern to the recommendation made by the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission (COC) to involuntarily rotate deputies to a different patrol station every five years.

While we understand the need to address the problem of deputy gangs and cliques that has plagued the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) for over 50 years, we do not agree in a "one-size-fits-all" approach, and do not believe this particular recommendation included in the COC's report should be implemented as currently written.

According to the COC's report, there are specific stations throughout Los Angeles County where deputy gangs/cliques run rampant. Fortunately, the Malibu-Lost Hills Sheriff's station is not one of them. And though we are sensitive to this being a problem in need of a unified approach countywide, we must also consider the welfare of the residents we represent, which could be compromised if the recommendation for involuntary deputy rotations is not amended.

There is a direct correlation between the high level of safety our residents are accustomed to and the exceptional deputies currently assigned to service our community. We believe deputies are motivated, in large part, to service communities they are familiar with and live close to. Forcing them to rotate from a station where there is no known deputy gang/clique problem with no regard for what matters to them or their quality of life is a dis-incentive that will lead to low morale, reduced quality of service, and ultimately could result in problems for the sheriff's department to retain and/or recruit good deputies, which could have a direct impact on our community. The possibility and likelihood of that happening is one of our primary concerns regarding this particular recommendation.

The whole premise of community-based policing promotes the notion that safer communities exist when residents and law enforcement are able to work together. To that end, we do not want to lose any of our deputies because of an idea that takes a solution and applies it uniformly, irrespective of whether the problem it aims to solve exists in a particular station or not.

Additionally, the COC's report includes specific language highlighting the ability of the sheriff's department to terminate deputies that engage in or are involved with deputy gang/cliقة activity. This solution makes a lot of sense and we urge LASD to utilize terminations as a solution to prevent the further proliferation of deputy gangs/cliques. Rather than mandating a rotation of deputies per the current recommendation, which makes no distinction between good and bad deputies, the department should act expeditiously to weed-out bad deputies through swift terminations when appropriate. That would be a logical approach we could support.

We want to see change through the implementation of pragmatic solutions. We recognize how challenging this problem is for you and your department, and we applaud your efforts in carefully considering all the recommended solutions contained in the COC report. We do not necessarily oppose the rotation of deputies in those stations where the problem of deputy gangs/cliques have been determined to exist as noted in the COC's report, but we do think an amendment to the way the recommendation is currently written is needed that addresses the concerns mentioned. Uniformly applying an involuntary deputy rotation program across all LASD stations would hurt, more than help, those stations where deputy gang/cliقة problems have not been identified.

We thank you in advance for listening to our concerns and we have the utmost confidence and trust that you will implement solutions that take into account the varying levels of threat that deputy gangs/cliques present at each LASD station.

If you should have any questions regarding this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at canstead@agourahillscity.org.

Respectfully,

Chris Anstead, Mayor
City of Agoura Hills

cc: Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
City of Agoura Hills Members of the City Council and City Manager