

BOARD of SUPERVISORS



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To the Alameda County Board of Supervisors:

We are writing to you as fellow Bay Area county supervisors, and as the Fiscal Agent for the Bay Area Urban Areas Security Initiative (BA UASI). We would like to express our concerns about the continued use of UASI funding for the annual Urban Shield exercises and expo. As the national debate about militarization of law enforcement intensifies, we are committed to shifting our priorities to more holistic and sustainable approaches to safety and emergency response. We are concerned that prioritizing militarized law enforcement training above other critical responses undermines Bay Area communities' abilities to respond to the range of emergencies most likely to affect our area. During this UASI project proposal period (which ends October 14), we encourage you to *not* seek funds for Urban Shield and instead take the opportunity to seek funding for other Bay Area UASI priority areas including: *Planning and Risk Management, Medical and Public Health, Emergency Planning and Community Preparedness, and Recovery*. In turn, as Fiscal Agents for BA UASI, we will continue to explore options available to us to shift away from the use of Urban Shield as a way to achieve Bay Area emergency response goals.

As you know, the Bay Area receives millions of dollars each year through the BA UASI, the primary source of funding for Urban Shield. The Initiative's charge is to "prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from terrorism." The UASI acknowledges, however, that "many of the capabilities which support terrorism preparedness simultaneously support preparedness for other hazards, including natural disasters and other major incidents" and stipulates that UASI funds *may be used* for other preparedness activities so long as those activities could also shore up anti-terrorism capabilities.

As the Fiscal Agent for the BA UASI, San Francisco county is responsible for establishing the procedures and executing the subgrant agreements for the money passing through the entire Bay Area for the UASI, not simply the City and County of San Francisco. Alameda County applies and has its funding allocated through San Francisco's fiscal sponsorship. Alameda County's FY 2015 proposal included \$4,901,339 to "Enhance Homeland Security Exercise, Evaluation, and Training Programs" (Urban Shield, Yellow Command, and similar Urban Shield-related activities). By contrast, Alameda County did not request *any* funding for Planning and Risk Management, Medical and Public Health, Emergency Planning and Community Preparedness, or Recovery—50% of the Bay Area Homeland Security Goals, and those most closely aligned with community health and well being.

Since 2007, the majority of funding that could be supporting emergency preparedness in the Bay Area—a region with significant natural disaster concerns including earthquake,

fire, and aquatic emergencies—has been poured into increasing the militarization of local law enforcement. The climate of increased police killings, militarized raids and sweeps, and surveillance technologies including drones has frayed already tattered community-police relations across the Bay Area.

**During this grant cycle, we encourage Alameda County to suspend its proposals for funding for Urban Shield and instead take the opportunity to seek funding for the above-mentioned Planning and Risk Management, Medical and Public Health, Emergency Planning and Community Preparedness, and Recovery areas.** As noted, UASI offers us a fair amount of latitude in how we disperse and use funding. This may include a wide range of first responder trainings as well as opportunities for first responder to collaborate with county and city institutions, along with non-governmental organizations. Discontinuing funding for Urban Shield does not foreclose on essential training, but instead allow us to invest in other UASI areas that are less tainted by controversy and community mistrust.

As the BA UASI Fiscal Agent, we understand that San Francisco must be a responsible steward of funding earmarked for disaster preparedness. We continue to collaborate with Alameda County and all BA UASI jurisdictions to ensure that we are creating comprehensive, Bay Area emergency response capability and competency to meet the needs of all Bay Area residents. In the current climate of increased concern about the militarization of the police, we run the risk of alienating residents whose investment, support, and collaboration are essential to robust emergency response planning. We are looking forward to playing a stronger role building sustainable preparedness activities, and we look forward to working with you more closely on these important issues toward building our capacity to respond to the needs of our Bay Area communities.

Sincerely,



Supervisor John Avalos  
District 11



Supervisor David Campos  
District 9

Supervisor Eric Mar  
District 1