



September 25, 2023

**LA County Board Of Supervisors**

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**US Department of Justice and 2015 Settlement Agreement Monitoring Team**

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**US Senator Alex Padilla, Senate Committee on the Judiciary**

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**Lancaster Mayor Rex Parris**

([rrparris@cityoflancasterca.org](mailto:rrparris@cityoflancasterca.org))

**Re: Lancaster Police Department and the 2015 AV Settlement Agreement**

Dear LA County Supervisors, Senator Padilla, US Dept of Justice & Monitors, and Mayor Parris:

We write to you with great urgency and deep concern. Like other AV residents, we learned [through the news media](#) earlier this month that the City of Lancaster launched a new City Police Department with an initial \$10 million of city funds, and an unspecified ongoing fiscal commitment. No community listening sessions were held, no community surveys, no needs assessments...literally no meaningful community engagement was conducted. **Of the many concerns we have surrounding the role, cost, and function of this new police force, rising to the top is our question about whether the Lancaster Police Department will be held accountable to the 2015 Settlement Agreement?**

As you all know, in 2015, the US DOJ entered into a Settlement Agreement with Lancaster, Palmdale, LA County and LASD for their Section 8 housing discrimination and policing



constitutional rights violations against Black and Latino residents.<sup>1</sup> And yet, despite 8 years of oversight by the DOJ Monitoring Team, the LASD and the County continue to be out of compliance on the vast majority of indicators, including unlawful and racist stops, searches, backseat detentions, use of force, handling of complaints, and positive community engagement.<sup>2</sup> Today, racial profiling of Black and Latinos residents persists as we continue to be stopped, searched and detained at higher rates than white residents, as documented every six months by the DOJ Monitoring Team.

After the June 24, 2023 WinCo Foods incident showing LASD excessive force against an elderly couple went viral, we sent the [Board of Supervisors a letter on July 13, 2023](#) asking to return the Settlement Agreement to Court. Our [October 2021 letter to the DOJ](#) also asked for a return to Court to modify the terms of the Settlement Agreement given the lack of consequences for noncompliance, and could have prevented the 2022 and 2023 police brutality incidents. The DOJ Monitors asked for the same thing in their [December 2022 Monitoring Report](#). As of today, we have received no official response on our requests from the DOJ or the County. The City of Lancaster adding additional policing entities, that may not be held to any standard, have no known oversight body, and a murky mission, adds urgency to this request. **It is our belief that ANY policing in the AV should be held to the Settlement Agreement, otherwise, officials could simply continue to invent new policing bodies to avoid constitutional policing, federal oversight and SA compliance.**

In addition to whether the Settlement Agreement will be applied to the new police department, the vast majority of whom are former LASD deputies, there are more questions than answers. What is the specific purpose of this new police department and how does it intersect with the Sheriff's Lancaster Station? What are the policies and procedures they will be following? Will there be an equivalent \$10M decrease in the contract that Lancaster currently pays to LASD? Why is Lancaster using a different drone company than the rest of the county? What is the jurisdiction of the drone program? Will the new police department increase the arrest and harassment of unhoused people and the poor?

We were further alarmed when we reached out and were informed by the LA County Office of Inspector General and the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission that neither have any jurisdiction over this new police department. Among the many questions keeping us up at night, is which government body will be looking out for the civil rights of AV residents, especially Black, Latinx, the unhoused and the poor.

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<sup>1</sup> Settlement Agreement, United States v. County of Los Angeles, No. 2:15-cv-03174 (C.D. Cal. Apr. 28, 2015) <https://www.justice.gov/file/414706/download>.

<sup>2</sup> Antelope Valley Monitoring Team 10th Semi-Annual Report June 2020 (2020), <http://www.antelopevalleysettlementmonitoring.info/content/documents/reports/10%20Semi-Annual%20Report.%20June%202020.pdf>.



[Cancel the Contract](#) is a coalition of community organizations and leaders from the Antelope Valley calling for the end of law enforcement violence and racism in our communities. We have faced decades of systemic violations of the constitutional rights of our poor, Black and Latino community members by LASD deputies in the cities of Palmdale, Lancaster and the unincorporated areas of the Antelope Valley, and in our schools. We continue to raise our voices against this unconstitutional and harmful treatment of our community by law enforcement. We implore you to respond and to act. Please reach us at (661) 544-5727 or [info@ctcav.org](mailto:info@ctcav.org) to set up a meeting to discuss this further. We appreciate your immediate attention to this crisis in our Antelope Valley community.

Sincerely,

**Cancel the Contract Antelope Valley**

**Steering Committee**

Waunette Cullors, Director and Co-Founder  
Raquel Derfler, Steering Committee Co-Chair  
Raycine Ector, Steering Committee Co-Chair  
Lynde Williams, Steering Committee Member at Large  
Cortez Chandler, Steering Committee Member at Large  
Ashley Khan, Steering Committee Youth Member  
Dennis Moore, Steering Committee Member at Large  
VaJezatha Payne, Steering Committee Member at Large

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