



Jeff Landry
Attorney General

January 17, 2017

Chief Michael Harrison
Superintendent, New Orleans Police Department
715 South Broad Street
New Orleans, LA 70119

Dear Chief Harrison,

By way of this letter, I would like to open up some discussion and take the opportunity to convey the intentions of our law enforcement efforts with the hope that we may work together even more closely to reduce violent crime.

As you know, the Louisiana Department of Justice (LADOJ) involvement in New Orleans is not an entirely new concept – as many of us in both agencies have developed professional relationships, cooperating with each other over our long law enforcement careers. With that said, the nature of this correspondence is to express our desire to continue our working relationship with your agency. The special agents of the LADOJ stand amongst the most experienced officers in our State; and as you are aware, the agents are career law enforcement officers – several of whom found their roots and began their successful careers within your own agency.

I must express some concern that an impression has been projected of LADOJ law enforcement agents conducting operations in the city as being rogue, unleashed, unchecked, and autonomous; all the while, rejecting the ongoing coordination we have already had with the New Orleans Police Department. You and your command staff know this to be untrue, as we have gone above and beyond to communicate and support your agency during every deployment. Regardless of how this false impression was perpetuated, I sincerely appreciate your support and acknowledgement in dismissing this disparaging description as untrue – since we did, in fact, communicate and coordinate with your agency.

Our office has law enforcement authority as defined in Louisiana Law Statute 36:704 that provides the Attorney General create an investigative division responsible for investigation of violations of criminal laws of the State. Beyond the aforementioned statute, this office's law enforcement authority can be found referenced throughout the State's criminal code in titles 14, 15, and 40 solidifying their place as peace officers in this State. We strongly disagree with your city attorneys' narrow interpretation of the law that our office lacks New Orleans city jurisdiction. Furthermore, Article VI section 9B of the State Constitution relative to Home Rule

Charter is clear that the police powers of the State shall not be abridged; effectively, the city home rule charter is subordinate to police authority of the State. I would rather avoid immersing too deeply in the interpretation of each statute and focus on the issue at hand – that we are qualified, experienced, and willing to help you make a difference in the city. I am lost on the fact that we find ourselves in our current position of disagreement when crime is rampant and your force is undermanned.

We want to provide support for your men and women who are facing violent offenders. Our agents are immensely qualified and exceed the standards of POST training. Additionally, they attend numerous training seminars throughout the year to stay current. Recently, the agents of the New Orleans division attended Color of Law training by the FBI to help ensure our citizens are constitutionally policed. Additionally, law enforcement agents within the LADOJ were deployed this year to devastated areas during the flood disaster and participated by extensively supporting local agencies in helping police their areas. Our office deploys special agents during hurricanes and is represented at GOHSEP, accepting law enforcement assignments from both the emergency command center and Louisiana Sheriff's Task Force. As you know, the LADOJ has always had a presence in the City of New Orleans; even during Hurricane Katrina, Attorney General Foti deployed his agents to New Orleans streets.

Chief, the point is we are not excluding New Orleans from our law enforcement efforts – especially not during the current high violent crime wave and your shortage of police officers. You must agree it would be better for the citizens and disadvantageous to the criminals if we were to work together as we were before the issue became politicized.

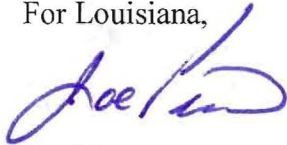
I would first ask you to consider rescinding your order instructing your officers to not work with our agents, as I would like to get our Fugitive Teams back together. As I informed you at our last meeting, I committed our Fugitive Apprehension Unit indefinitely to your warrant squad VOWS Unit for no less than one day a week. I regret that you were previously informed about this enforcement endeavor by your staff; however our office did not publicly announce the operation as it would be counter-productive, along with being an officer safety concern, to inform the most wanted that we are stepping up efforts to apprehend them. During this endeavor, our units combined operations on 10 occasions yielding 24 arrests. My unit executed 8 more fugitive arrests in the city independently. This is an example of effective teamwork: not only did it yield positive results; but our partnership also enhanced officer safety, which I am sure you agree is paramount. While our Fugitive Apprehension Team is in demand with its statewide obligations and ongoing commitment to all law enforcement agencies, it is my intention to focus on violent fugitives from justice in the city; and the most sensible way of doing so is reinitiating the partnership with your department.

We are enhancing our coverage in the New Orleans area – including more violent crime investigators and increasing the presence of our fugitive apprehension unit, child exploitation unit, and public corruption investigators. We will be intensifying efforts with our current Federal partners in this aspect and plan to expand our crime-fighting initiatives with additional State and Federal agencies. Our continued efforts will be conducted entirely by full-time LADOJ employees.

In closing, the violence in the City of New Orleans is ever present and we know your officers are diligent in their work and doing their best. We want to continue supporting your officers. We are far from being an out of town organization encroaching on city turf for publicity; and myself, and the entire LADOJ team, was dismayed to be portrayed as such. Our agents working here are connected to the city and have family here. No one holds the monopoly on enforcing State laws, neither the Mayor nor the Attorney General. Our job is to enforce the same laws that the criminal element so audaciously violates, causing disastrous results that gravely impact the lives of our citizens.

I am proposing that LADOJ Supervisor Bruce Harrison continue his efforts in participating and attending the weekly intelligence meetings with your staff so he may determine where we can be of the most effective use. We should defer to our elected officials to communicate their positions and beliefs; and, as law enforcement leaders, we should continue to fight crime. For the safety and betterment of quality of life for our citizens and visitors, we would like your cooperation as we move forward bringing all resources to bear against the criminal element spoiling our great city. Please contact me at your earliest convenience so we may further our conversations.

For Louisiana,



Joe Picone
Director, Investigation Division
Louisiana Department of Justice