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OFFICE OF THE ORLEANS PARISH DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
JASON ROGERS WILLIAMS

June 14, 2024

Honorable Susie Morgan  
United States District Court  
Eastern District of Louisiana  
500 Poydras Street  
New Orleans, LA 70130  
**Via Email Only**

**Re: Response to Eye on Surveillance Letter**

Dear Honorable Susie Morgan:

The recent correspondence from the group Eye on Surveillance (EOS) unfairly mischaracterizes the federally funded Risk Terrain Modeling (RTM) tool used as part of our Data Informed Community Engagement (NODICE) program and falsely alleges that we are purposefully violating applicable law, specifically with regard to predictive policing technology. The group also claims impropriety with NOPD's participation in NODICE.

The cited law is a city ordinance intended to impose guardrails on the City's use of surveillance technology to prevent potential misuse as technology rapidly advances. OPDA is not subject to restrictions on City entities, as our legal mandate is to represent the State. However, none of the technologies or methodologies used in RTM are within the municipality's prohibited list; in fact, we have relied on them to build out this initiative. We wouldn't ask NOPD to break guardrails; we know how hard they've worked to reach substantial consent decree compliance. Our use of RTM simply does not constitute surveillance technology. RTM is a diagnostic tool for crime prevention, it is not a predictive algorithm.

As EOS is aware, the ordinance's predictive policing provision was intended to restrict law enforcement from targeting individuals based upon a predictive algorithm versus actual intelligence and belief that individuals are engaged in criminal activity.

OPDA is a prosecuting agency and does not engage in policing. NODICE, in general, and OPDA, in particular, do not direct law enforcement deployment or investigative techniques. Further, our use of RTM is not to predict criminality or ID suspected criminals, but rather to understand and diagnose the conditions that may have contributed to a crime's occurrence. EOS ignores the unprecedented type of collaboration involved in this initiative and only mentions police and prosecutors. This does a great disservice to all of the other partners<sup>i</sup> in this work. In reference to any allegation of a lack of transparency, our efforts have been openly presented ad nauseum in public forums, including at City Council, and community public safety meetings as well as extensively covered in local and national media stories.

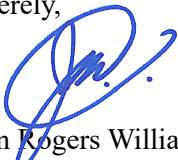
RTM is used to examine the topography and environmental factors that create vulnerabilities so that we can effectively engage and support improvements to increase safety and quality of life. It is a single yet valuable component of our larger NODICE initiative. NODICE encompasses a wide range of activities in the quest

for public safety. Notably, the actions that have grown from our NODICE initiative are almost exclusively non-law enforcement. This public safety model has been an effective resource deployment initiative in several jurisdictions nationwide. In fact, former NOPD Chief Michael Harrison employed the model during his tenure working as Commissioner for the City of Baltimore. We chose to consult with Chief Harrison for this project based not only on his successes using the strategy in Baltimore, but also because he was a staunch proponent for robust compliance with the Consent Decree and ethical policing reforms facilitated via federal oversight.

In the past EOS have been partners we were able to rely on for accountability and vetting necessary to deter the misuse of technological advances. There certainly must be space for that level of debate and discourse. However, our missions diverge when their effort becomes about handicapping the ability of government agencies to protect and advocate for real people plagued by the crime and quality of life issues that contribute to generational suffering. Their hardline opposition to crime reduction efforts not only fails to accurately reflect community priorities, but also perpetuates the misguided notion that vulnerable communities do not wish for the same secure and stable environments that others enjoy. Their stance here only serves to maintain the inequities that contribute to crime in the first place.

EOS suggests that we direct our efforts toward community investment and building trust, yet targets an initiative that does exactly that. In fact, the communities we've engaged with have expressed overwhelming support for NODICE, and the widespread collaboration it fosters serves to increase the overall efficacy of government. The NODICE initiative is regularly on the ground in communities speaking to residents; and has regular contact with a large contingent of partners from nonprofits, service providers, historians and dozens of members of clergy who have hosted forums with their constituencies to have their input on appropriate interventions heard. We will continue to employ data-informed systems to drive community engagement and create solutions to improve lives.

Sincerely,



Jason Rogers Williams  
Orleans Parish District Attorney

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<sup>i</sup> *Partners: City of New Orleans (including all public-facing departments), New Orleans City Council, New Orleans Police Department, Louisiana State Police, New Orleans Fire Department, NOLA Coalition, VERA Institute, Roots of Music, Claiborne Innovation District, Ubuntu Village, Tulane University, Loyola University, Communities of Hope (interfaith/multidenominational clergy coalition), SWBNO, Isaiah Institute, Dr. Angela Chalk, Dr. Raynard Sanders, New Orleans State Legislative Delegation, Cops 8, Chambers, Various Business Owners*