

CITY OF OAKLAND



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Date: September 9, 2020
To: Oakland City Administrator, Colleagues, and Members of the Public
From: Oakland Council President Kaplan
Re: The Need for Clean Air Centers to Protect Our Community

Dear Mr. City Administrator Reiskin,

As you probably recall, I have been requesting, a list of clean air buildings that would be made available to provide safety for the public during days of excessive heat and bad air quality. This includes my prior requests for the budget allocations to include allowing the use of funds to make improvements as needed to buildings, HVAC systems, filtration, etc to be able to have libraries, senior centers, and other public facilities be prepared to handle the need. This is particularly important as last year, on days of bad air alerts, libraries closed, leaving people at further risk outdoors. Thus, I requested steps needed to identify and open facilities to provide safe spaces on high heat and bad air quality days, to protect workers and the public from these conditions.

I emailed you to follow-up, including to identify what buildings could be used and what would be needed to make them functional, and the status of funding allocations.

Since that email, I submitted a formal scheduling request, to bring a report to Council, for you to bring to us and the public the requested information, about what buildings had been opened and what additional steps were needed to ensure adequate facilities.

My request to schedule this item was granted, and your report was scheduled for the Tuesday, September 15th City Council meeting.

<https://oakland.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4632202&GUID=02647F7B-FE3F-423D-BA61-7975A4A4C2ED>

However, we have now seen the report you have submitted, and it lacks the information requested, and it appears to disclose that you have not opened any clean air buildings despite many days of heavy smoke and high heat, and from the report, we cannot tell if you have any plans to open any, nor have you provided information about what is needed to open them.

I am concerned that it appears you have created a standard for opening of such centers that is designed to actually not open them, even on days that have dangerously high levels of heat and air pollution.

Also, I would note that the PDF you submitted does not allow for the clicking of hyperlinks, so if the blue text in your report was intended to be links to additional information, those are not working.

Therefore, I am proposing that we schedule this item to come back to us at our next City Council meeting, to include clear information about what facilities are prepared to open for these uses, what programs have you set up for masks and other protective equipment distribution, what steps or funds are needed to achieve this, and direction for a policy of opening them in a way that is protective of our community and public health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Rebecca Kaplan".

Rebecca Kaplan
Oakland City Council President

City Council
September 15, 2020
File # 20-0608

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RE: Smoke and safe spaces?



Reiskin, Edward

Tue 7/28/2020 9:58 AM

To: Kaplan, Rebecca

Cc: Jones, Kimberly; Simmons, LaTonda; Mitchell, Jason



Good Morning, President Kaplan, and thanks for raising this issue.

We are monitoring the air quality closely, and should it now, or in a future wildfire event, reach an unsafe level, we would initiate interventions (e.g., clean-air shelter space, N-95 mask distribution). We are not at that level now, but are wrapping up our planning efforts with regard to shelter space in a COVID environment, and are positioning N-95 masks with our homeless outreach folks for distribution if and when needed.

We will keep you posted as we progress. Certainly want to be ready for fire season, as you suggest.

Ed

From: Kaplan, Rebecca

Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 9:12 AM

To: Reiskin, Edward <EReiskin@oaklandca.gov>; Simmons, LaTonda <LSimmons@oaklandca.gov>; Mitchell, Jason <JWMitchell@oaklandca.gov>

Cc: Jones, Kimberly <KJones3@oaklandca.gov>

Subject: Smoke and safe spaces?

Good morning and best wishes and health to you.

As you may have noticed, there is smoke in the air in Oakland this morning, likely coming from a fire in San Francisco.

I wanted to inquire on the status of our plans for clean air options and responding to smoke/fire situations. As you know, wildfire season is expected to grow, and thus, for there to be multiple days when there is bad air quality outside.

With most public buildings closed, what is the plan in terms of where people can go, including those who are unhoused, on days of high smoke/poor air quality?

Thanks much and best wishes,
Rebecca Kaplan

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