



News from: The City of Oakland FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oakland officials ask public for help in identifying vandals *City leaders encourage public to send in videos or photos of window smashing & vandalism related to recent protests*

Oakland, CA – City Attorney Barbara Parker and City Councilmember Rebecca Kaplan are calling on members of the public to submit video or photographic evidence of vandalism associated with recent protests in Oakland.

On a number of occasions in recent years, peaceful protests in Oakland have been disrupted by small groups of individuals who have smashed windows, set fires, burned cars, bullied local businesses and violently confronted both police and nearby demonstrators.

Following a wave of incidents on May 1 – including the burning of a police car – City officials are asking members of the public to come forward with evidence that can be used to identify vandals and hold them accountable in court. Videos or photos can be emailed to: stopwindow Smashers@gmail.com or mailed directly to the Neighborhood Law Corps at 1 Frank Ogawa Plaza, 6th Floor, Oakland, CA 94612. Identifying information should be included for verification purposes.

“Oakland champions the First Amendment rights of demonstrators. However, we will not tolerate individuals hijacking demonstrations to trash our town and act out in destructive or harmful ways,” City Attorney Barbara Parker said.

“As a city, we must take action to stop destruction that harms innocent local residents, property and livelihood,” said Oakland City Councilmember Rebecca Kaplan. “I appreciate that we’ve been able to work with City Attorney Parker to sue window smashers to make clear that this behavior will not be tolerated.”

The City of Oakland has retained an investigator to review video and photographic evidence. As evidence becomes available, the City Attorney’s Office intends to file lawsuits to recover damages. The goals of these actions are twofold: (1) to assure that taxpayers do not have to shoulder replacement and repair costs for vandalism, and (2) to deter wanton destructive acts during future protests by holding individuals accountable for their behavior.

Oakland’s Neighborhood Law Corps – the community law unit in the City Attorney’s Office – has filed lawsuits against three individuals who were arrested for vandalism during recent protests. One was arrested after police saw him use a metal chair to smash the windows of a City building in the early morning hours of November 3, 2011. The other two defendants were arrested January 28, 2012 for spray painting on public property in downtown Oakland.

The three lawsuits seek damages to cover the cost of repairs, plus other special and punitive damages to be determined by the court. None of the defendants reside in Oakland.

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