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Dear Members of the Oakland City Council,

Thank you again for placing Measure C on the Oakland ballot earlier this year. We were pleased to see that 82.3% of Oakland voters saw the continuing value of a vibrant Oakland Public Library and supported this measure. Thank you also for placing Measure Q on the ballot in 2020. We were likewise pleased to see over two thirds of Oakland voters support a vibrant and accessible future for parks, recreation, and youth development. We write to you today regarding an important decision you can make to keep faith with these voters and ensure the measures deliver the intended impact.

Both Measure C and Q's parcel taxes come with "maintenance of effort" contributions from the City of Oakland's General Fund. These contributions support the baseline library services the City has historically funded before the parcel tax-driven expansion in library hours and services. These contributions also fund various parks and recreation services, which the passage of Measure Q in 2020 expanded upon. While both measures' parcel taxes are indexed for inflation, the maintenance of effort contribution for both is not indexed for inflation in the text of their respective ballot measures.

We therefore ask you to amend the City of Oakland's Consolidated Fiscal Policy to establish that an annual inflation adjustment to the Oakland Public Library's and Oakland Parks, Recreation, and Youth Development's maintenance of effort as an official Council budgeting policy. This action is vital to prevent the maintenance of effort contribution from being eroded over time due to inflation. Such erosion could endanger library hours, decrease resources for recreation services or park maintenance (e.g., cleaning), result in lost positions, or even eventually lead to branch closures.

Writing an annual inflation adjustment into the City's policy on how to craft the biannual budget will create an important expectation for future budget cycles. Future Councils will still have the flexibility to waive this proposed provision of the Consolidated Fiscal Policy in the event of a fiscal emergency. In normal budgetary cycles, we expect that this provision will help ensure that proper inflation adjustments are adhered to.

We thank Councilmembers for their continued interest in the well-being and success of the Oakland Public Library and Oakland's parks and recreation facilities, and we are glad to address any questions you may have regarding this proposal.

Best,

Library Advisory Commission

Princess Allen, Chair
Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission