



City Council

Susan Candell, Mayor  
Teresa Gerring, Vice Mayor  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Mayor of Lafayette's Statement  
Concerning Recent Events At  
El Curtola Overpass**

**LAFAYETTE, CALIF., Jan. 14, 2021**—The Lafayette City Council and I have closely followed recent events at the El Curtola overpass, which crosses Highway 24 in Lafayette. Our first priority is the safety of our City's residents and we have been concerned by reports of violence and intimidation on the overpass. The Lafayette Police Department, acting within the law, has responded appropriately and will continue to monitor the overpass closely. It is important that if you believe you are a victim of a crime or witness a law being broken you report the incident immediately to the Lafayette Police Department by calling the non-emergency dispatch number, (925) 284-5010, or in the event of a life-threatening emergency, dialing 911.

We have been asked why we have allowed the protests to take place on the bridge. The First Amendment allows for a wide range of protected activity. While our priority is to keep residents safe, we must also allow protected activity that is within the law. Peaceful forms of protest in public spaces are a bedrock of our democracy. We must continue to uphold those rights for everyone, both those living in Lafayette and those who come to Lafayette to express their views.

I wish to address some of the concerns raised over reported conduct on the overpass. Along with our City Manager, City Attorney, and Police Chief, I have carefully reviewed the range of lawful responses that we, as a City, can implement concerning events on the El Curtola overpass. I can say with full confidence that the response by our Police Department has been appropriate and timely. When violations of the law have been reported, including allegations of assault, the Police Department has made arrests and our judicial system is processing these matters.

There have been calls for the overpass to be closed. Under the law, however, we cannot do this and prohibit lawful protests. Likewise, the City cannot limit access to the overpass to only residents, as has been suggested. All members of the public, no matter where they live, have the right to peacefully assemble on the overpass. If the City of Lafayette were to hinder those rights, it could expose the City to significant legal challenges and, perhaps, make Lafayette a focal point for future protests.

Working with the Police Chief, I will continue to monitor events closely. The Lafayette Police will have an ongoing presence at the overpass during the protests and will increase patrols if necessary. We will act accordingly to avoid violence and will make arrests should any law be violated.

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Let us all do our part to uphold the First Amendment and to deescalate a sensitive situation. I know that nerves are frayed. But we must come together to ensure that our democracy functions peacefully and respectfully. Thank you for your patience.

Susan Candell  
Mayor  
City of Lafayette

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