



City of Tacoma

City Council

March 3, 2021

The Honorable Bob Ferguson
Attorney General of the State of Washington
1125 Washington St SE
PO Box 40100
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Attorney General Ferguson,

Today, March 3rd, is a date of deep significance in Tacoma and across the region, as it marks the one year anniversary of Manuel Ellis' death. As this case has passed from the Pierce County Sheriff, to the Pierce County Prosecutor, to the Washington State Patrol, and finally – in mid-November – to the Attorney General's Office, Mr. Ellis' family and loved ones have waited for the conclusion of an independent investigation. Indeed, the tension and weight of a full year with so many questions yet to be answered can be felt throughout our community.

Last week, we heard the Ellis family's call for closure, and we heard them implore you to move forward in your review of the Manuel Ellis case. We believe every one of us can empathize with the family's frustration and heartbreak on the anniversary of the loss of their loved one.

The City of Tacoma appreciates the diligent work of the Attorney General's Office as you conduct your review of the Manuel Ellis case, as well as the recent update your office provided on this work.

As Tacoma's elected leaders, we write today to advocate that the Manuel Ellis case continues to be prioritized. We trust that the Attorney General's Office has heard the requests of the Ellis family and this Council. We hope you will continue to place immediate emphasis on a thorough and independent review and move with urgency toward the release of the final investigative report and charging decisions in this case.

On this solemn date, as we and the Tacoma community continue to await the outcomes of this case, we express our sorrow for the family of Manuel Ellis.

Going forward, we must take every step we can to restore trust in the investigation of deaths in police custody – and that applies not just in Tacoma, but for every family in Washington state. We will continue to advocate for a statewide office to do just that, and we hope you will reach out to us if there are ways we can work in partnership to move this goal forward.


Yours in Service,


Mayor Victoria Woodards


Council Member Chris Beale – Position 5


Deputy Mayor Keith Blocker – Position 3


Council Member Lillian Hunter – Position 6


Council Member John Hines – Position 1


Council Member Conor McCarthy – Position 7


Council Member Robert Thoms – Position 2


Council Member Kristina Walker – Position 8


Council Member Catherine Ushka – Position 4

CC: The Honorable Jeannie Darneille
The Honorable Jake Fey
The Honorable Laurie Jenkins
The Honorable Dan Bronoske
The Honorable Mari Leavitt
The Honorable T'wina Nobles
The Honorable Steve Conway
The Honorable Steve Kirby
The Honorable Melanie Morgan