



## Press Release

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For Immediate Release:

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# One year after San Francisco's first public integrity review, Controller's Office releases status of legal actions taken and recommendation implementation

*In conjunction with the City Attorney's investigation stemming from alleged criminal wrongdoing by former Public Works Director Mohammed Nuru, the Controller's Office is providing an update on the five public integrity reviews it has completed since June 2020.*

**SAN FRANCISCO (August 4, 2021)** — The Controller's Office has published an [update on the City's implementation of recommendations](#) laid out in five previously released public integrity review reports, as well as the various charges and legal actions taken since Mohammed Nuru's arrest early in 2020. Controller Ben Rosenfield released the following statement: "The offenses uncovered in the past year are disgraceful and disappointing, but I'm encouraged by the urgency with which many of our recommendations have been addressed and the resulting legislative and policy changes and mayoral directives that have been established. Corruption, fraud, and the willful disregard of regulations are a blight on any area of public service, and our collaboration with the City's Attorney's Office will continue to be a critical part of delivering the transparency and accountability San Franciscans are owed. There is much more work ahead of us."

In January 2020 the City Attorney's Office, with the support of the Controller's Office, launched an independent public integrity investigation and created a hotline in response to federal criminal charges against Mr. Nuru for aiding and abetting honest services wire fraud in connection with an alleged scheme to bribe public officials. Concurrently, the Controller, in cooperation with the City Attorney, undertook a public integrity review of city contracts (or lack thereof), purchase orders, permits, and grants for red flags that could indicate process failures. In 14 months, the U.S. Attorney's Office has brought criminal charges against 11 city employees and contractors and against private parties who worked for clients on city building permits.

Due to the City Attorney's legislation and ongoing investigations, city contractors who were federally charged have been suspended from doing business with the City, and two others have agreed to legal settlements with

the City. The City's refuse collection contractor, Recology, agreed to a \$100 million settlement that lowers rates and refunds ratepayers for overcharges that occurred under Mr. Nuru. Senior officials at the Department of Building Inspection (DBI), the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), and elsewhere have also resigned. The District Attorney's Office has filed criminal charges against a former city employee in response to information released in a Controller's review. At the same time, many recommendations in the Controller's public integrity review reports have been implemented or are in the process of being implemented.

"Corruption will not be tolerated in our city," said City Attorney Dennis Herrera. "If someone is gaming the system or abusing the public trust, we are going to get to the bottom of it. That is what we have been doing, and our work with Controller Ben Rosenfield and his team is producing results. Crooked public officials or people who seek to bribe their way into city contracts fail our residents, erode public trust, and undermine the exceptional work done by thousands of San Francisco public servants every day. I'm heartened to see that many of the systemic changes that we are supporting with the Controller have been implemented."

The Controller's Office will continue to assess selected city policies and procedures to evaluate their adequacy in preventing abuse and fraud. Future reports will address DBI's permitting and inspection processes, the SFPUC's contracting processes, and citywide ethics reporting requirements.

## **Tips**

Investigators from the Controller's Office consider every allegation of wrongdoing raised by city employees and members of the public. To report suspected public integrity abuses related specifically to the Nuru investigation, please contact the Public Integrity Tip Line. You can provide information via e-mail at [publicintegrity@sfgov.org](mailto:publicintegrity@sfgov.org) or by phone at (415) 554-7657. All tips may be submitted anonymously and will remain confidential. Reports to this tip line, as well as tips to the Controller's whistleblower hotline, are critical to the City's ability to fight abuses and lapses of public integrity by city employees and contractors. As provided for by the San Francisco Charter, the Controller's Office ensures that complaints are investigated by departments with the appropriate jurisdiction and independence from the alleged wrongdoing.

Information on city payments, searchable by department and vendor, are available on the Controller's public transparency website at [openbook.sfgov.org](http://openbook.sfgov.org). Anyone may file any allegation of improper or illegal public activity with the City's Whistleblower Program at [sfcontroller.org/whistleblower-program](http://sfcontroller.org/whistleblower-program). That program, administered by the Controller's Office, often partners with the City Attorney's Office on investigations.

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