



San Diego City Attorney
Mara W. Elliott



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 14, 2024

Contact: Andrew Sharp at
asharp@sandiego.gov or (619) 723-1674

City Attorney Mara W. Elliott Says San Diego Must Do More to Fight Corruption

*Testifies before Ethics Commission on need to
ensure independence, increase oversight, raise penalties*

The San Diego City Attorney says the verdict is in on the City's existing ethics laws, and they are too lax to adequately protect taxpayers from waste, fraud, and abuse. The San Diego City Attorney will argue for stiffer penalties and greater independence for this oversight body at a hearing this afternoon of the Ethics Commission. The City Attorney is expected to testify at approximately 5 p.m.

“The ethics reform agenda I introduced last fall is intended to protect taxpayers and increase confidence in City governance,” City Attorney Elliott says. **“We have an opportunity and an obligation to share our observations with the public and ask them to support common sense reforms. We can start that process today with a frank and open discussion at the Ethics Commission.”**

Elliott submitted several proposals to the Ethics Commission for consideration at today's hearing. The most prominent reforms would increase oversight by providing the Ethics Commission with greater independence and increase the financial penalties it may assess.

Recent City media releases can be accessed on the San Diego City Attorney's website: <https://www.sandiego.gov/cityattorney>
Follow the City Attorney's Office on Instagram: [@sdcityattorney](https://www.instagram.com/sdcityattorney) • [Instagram photos and videos](#)

1200 Third Avenue, Suite 1620, San Diego, California 92101-4188 (619) 236-6220

“We must incentivize elected officials and lobbyists to follow the City’s ethics laws,” says Elliott. “The current \$5,000 penalty is not a real deterrent for someone hoping to influence a development project worth billions of dollars in profits. The Ethics Commission must be able to assess penalties that have real teeth so that the financial risks match the rewards.”

The City Attorney said she is looking forward to a robust conversation with the Ethics Commission this afternoon and to hearing others’ proposals for potential reforms. She will bring other reform proposals to the City Council’s Rules Committee next week on whistleblower protections and more government transparency.

City Attorney Elliott is scheduled to testify today before the Ethics Commission at approximately 5:00 p.m. The complete agenda is here: [agenda_240314.pdf \(sandiego.gov\)](#).

###