



OPEN LETTER TO TONY TAVAREZ, DIRECTOR, DISTRICT 4, CALTRANS AND JESSE ARREGUIN, MAYOR OF BERKELEY FROM THE RESIDENTS OF THE ENCAMPMENTS ON CALTRANS AND CITY OF BERKELEY PROPERTY

October 27, 2019

Dear Mayor Arreguin and Director Tavarez,

We have heard that you are meeting this week to discuss what to do about the encampments on Caltrans and City of Berkeley property.

We have not been invited and we have not been told directly about your meeting, but we live on property where you enforce your rules and are the most affected by what you will be talking about. We are not intentionally trying to break any rules, but we cannot be on sidewalks in Berkeley or on private property. We are only somewhat tolerated on public property. We want to cooperate. We want to help find a solution.

We need you to know what we are experiencing and we need you to hear what we are asking:

We are here because we have no other place to go.

For years, every two weeks Caltrans crews and the California Highway Patrol have come through to evict us. They NEVER say what day they are coming. If we don't move fast enough or carry everything we own fast enough or are away from our tents when they come, they throw all of our possessions in a garbage truck. We almost never get them back. The few possessions we need to survive outdoors are completely destroyed by Caltrans workers and taken directly to the dump.

Because we have no place to go, we move back as soon as Caltrans crews leave and the same thing happens over and over again. Very often they take our belongings, but leave the trash. Their intention is not to clean up the trash. Their intent is to clear us out.

On September 19, some of us refused to move. After a while, the Caltrans crews and the CHP drove off. They left ALL of the trash, which had been piled in bags ready for pickup.

Last week, the residents of two encampments refused to move, demanding a real answer to the question, "Where do we go?" Caltrans crews did not come. No one collected the trash, which was piled ready for pickup. Everyone involved – CHP, Caltrans, the residents, government officials, etc. – know we have no place to go. More and more of us will refuse to move until there is an answer to that question. We want to come up with a real solution. Won't you meet us at the table?

More than anyone else, we have an interest in having the trash picked up. If you don't pick up the trash we get *rats*. The trash is a health hazard *for us*. No one is stopping Caltrans from picking up the trash. No



Ms. Latoya West
Adrew Peter

one is stopping the City of Berkeley. We've repeatedly asked Berkeley to help us and have gotten no response. *The rats are multiplying and we are being blamed!*

We, the residents, have attended a Berkeley City Council meeting, we have marched to City Hall to meet with officials, we have written letters asking for help but we get no response. We do not have phones, so we cannot call ahead and we do not have electricity or computers to email.

This is what we ask/demand:

*Samuel Phillips
#Activist*

1. Berkeley/Caltrans: Don't evict us until we have a place to go.
Berkeley: You do not have shelter space for all of us, and many of us cannot go into shelters. If you want to know why, talk to us. We are willing to walk to City Hall to talk to you.
2. Berkeley: We have seen a proposal for a sanctioned encampment, which could be a place for us to go. We need that to happen quickly. Caltrans/City of Berkeley: Do not evict us unless you can provide a lawful place for us to go. We will clean up and cooperate with creating healthy, safe, and clean public spaces.
3. Berkeley/Caltrans: Make an agreement that Berkeley will take over maintenance of some of the Caltrans parcels around the I-80/University Avenue Intersection. Berkeley should then allow people to remain in place while removing trash and providing sanitation facilities.
4. Berkeley/Caltrans: PICK UP THE TRASH NOW.
5. Berkeley/Caltrans when you are making decisions that affect our lives include us, or at the very least, let us know what you are deciding. It's the right thing to do and you will make better decisions with us than without us.

Kemie Crawford

Sharon Peters

Miss Baker

We are holding out an olive branch to you. We are not animals but human beings. Please help us. Please listen to us. Please talk to us. You can email WheredowegoBerk@gmail.com to arrange a meeting or visit us at the encampments.

Sharon Peters
Respectfully,

Andrea Benson

Frank T. Ditter

614 53

Stephanie Ringstad

Open letter to Tony Tavaraz, Director, District 4, Caltrans and Jesse Arreguin, Mayor of Berkeley from the residents of the encampments on Caltrans and City of Berkeley property

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