



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

Charles Allen
Councilmember, Ward 6

Chairperson
Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety
Co-Chairperson
Special Committee on COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery

Committee Member
Business and Economic Development
Health
Transportation and the Environment

July 7, 2021

Anthony Crispino
Interim Director
Department of Forensic Sciences
401 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Interim Director Crispino:

The Department of Forensic Sciences (“DFS”) is currently confronting a number of issues related to its independence, credibility, and transparency. I know you are working hard to restore public and stakeholder confidence in the agency and ensure the District maintains an independent and accredited forensic laboratory.

As part of these efforts, the Executive has engaged SNA International, LLC (“SNA”), an independent firm located in Alexandria, Virginia, with extensive forensic science laboratory experience. On May 28, Mayor Bowser wrote to my office on her state of mind regarding the issues DFS was confronting and her priorities moving forward. The letter stated that the Executive intended to contract with SNA for a “complete assessment of the agency and to support its current functions” (“First Contract”).¹ The amount budgeted for SNA to conduct this evaluation is \$850,000.²

On June 29, a different contract was filed with the Council to approve an award to SNA for upgrading, implementing, and integrating the current DFS laboratory information management system (“LIMS”), in an amount not to exceed \$1,175,427 (“Second Contract”).³ The Second Contract would support an onsite project team of five contractors from SNA to assist DFS with implementing “a more comprehensive LIMS integration that will provide tenable results and

¹ Letter from Mayor Muriel Bowser to Council Chairman Phil Mendelson and Chairperson Charles Allen, Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety (May 28, 2021).

² Letter from Mayor Muriel Bowser to Mr. Fitzroy Lee, Interim Chief Financial Officer, Office of the Chief Financial Officer (May 18, 2021).

³ CA24-0193, Proposed Contract with SNA International, LLC, <https://lims.dccouncil.us/Legislation/CA24-0193>. CA24-0193 will be deemed approved on July 10, 2021 unless a resolution of approval or disapproval is introduced by the Council.

performance tracking, allowing the laboratory to establish data-driven goals for production, service, and quality assurance deliverables.”⁴

Through the First Contract, SNA will provide critical and much-needed services. SNA will presumably engage in a deep and comprehensive review of DFS’ operations and hopefully shed light on the changes that need to be made at the agency. Regarding the Second Contract, DFS recently highlighted to the Committee that upgrades and customization of LIMS were a priority for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2021.⁵ SNA would be providing a specific service, even though any upgrades made to LIMS could play a role in addressing agency shortcomings and necessary corrective measures.

I am writing to gain a better understanding of SNA’s ability to provide both services and identify any potential conflicts that could arise while executing the First and Second Contracts simultaneously. I would appreciate your responses to the following questions:

- (1) Are any proposed members of SNA’s LIMS project team engaged in the review of the agency’s operations; and
- (2) What steps will DFS take to ensure that any potential conflicts of interest – or the appearance thereof – are avoided or mitigated?

Thank you in advance for your partnership and leadership during this transition. I look forward to continuing to work with you to restore independence, credibility, and transparency at DFS.

Sincerely,



Councilmember Charles Allen, Ward 6
Chairperson, Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety
Co-Chairperson, Special Committee on COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery

Cc: Chris Geldart, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Department of Forensic Sciences, *FY21 Performance Oversight Responses* (March 26, 2021), <https://dccouncil.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/JPS-Performance-Oversight-Responses-2021-DFS.pdf>.