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April 24, 2026
Alexandria, Louisiana

VETO MESSAGE

It is essential to recognize that ignorance of the law does not absolve individuals or organizations from responsibility based on the principle of *ignorantia juris non excusat* ("ignorance of the law does not excuse"). Organizational leaders maintained legal positions and actions with unfavorable outcomes when reviewed by the courts and the attorney general, serving as a reminder that legal missteps—whether due to misunderstanding or oversight—have consequences. Yet, before the Alexandria City Council, the organization misrepresents positions with impunity. Somehow, we are expected to say, oh, this time "it is on the up and up."

Well, it isn't. And now the Greater Alexandria Economic Development Authority ("GAEDA") is being supported in its deceit unwittingly by some on the Council. The Council is appeasing the motivations of con artists and dividers who seek to destroy relationships, foment rancor in official proceedings, overtly politick on public access, *gaslight*, and shift blame for increasingly abject failure. The administration is blameless with regard to GAEDA's, and the Council's, self-generated legal woes.

Here are the *indisputable* facts: An intergovernmental agreement was properly executed between the City and GAEDA, as had prior ones. The ordinance, and contract that followed, resulted from arms-length discussions and a unanimous vote by the agency statutorily organized to assist the City for the purposes contemplated and undertaken by the City. **GAEDA came to the Executive Branch with the proposal, not the other way around!** GAEDA offered the deal now being rescinded.

The City's policy should uphold the legal principle that its legislative acts affecting contractual relationships should not be rescinded if such rescission impairs existing contract rights, interferes with current obligations, or decreases the City's basis or value in a cooperative relationship, *especially after the fact* and based simply on new "politics" after a new commission following an election. The City cannot reduce its value proposition without sufficient legal cause to avoid prohibited public donations. See La. Ag. Op. No. 13-0061, No. 13-0079, and No. 14-0045. The enacted ordinance discussed here rescinds Alexandria City Council Ordinance 178-2024, which authorized the City to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with GAEDA, a public partner agency created by the City to serve the City—not its own counterfeited ends. The threshold requirement of the constitutional doctrine for distinguishing between invalid and lawful expenditures and transfers of public funds and property is the presence of a legal obligation or duty by the transferor to alienate said funds or property. *Town of Brusly v. West Baton Rouge Parish Police Jury*, 238 So.2d (La.App. 1st Cir. 1973).

If you want to hide the law, so they say . . . place it in a law book. Here is the *public purpose* of GAEDA:

C. The special taxing district is created for the purpose of cooperative economic development between the city of Alexandria and the special taxing district.

D. The district shall have as its purpose cooperative economic development between the city of Alexandria and the district, in order to provide for the renovation, restoration, and development of property in the city of Alexandria and district and to pay the costs of capital improvements relating thereto, and to engage in cooperative endeavors with the state and its political subdivisions or political corporations, with the United States or its agencies, or with any public or private association, corporation, or individual.

La.R.S. 33:2740.60. GAEDA literally comes before Alexandria to ask the *ersatz* question of how it can separate from the City!

It is shown by the City it has partially performed and is being hampered in continued or full performance by actions of GAEDA. It is further maintained by the City the actions by GAEDA constitute an anticipated or actual breach, in demonstrable bad faith. The City placed the agency in default. The proposed rescission ordinance: (i) is a legally unsound position for the Alexandria City Council, perhaps requiring a declaratory judgment and other relief to protect municipal finances, fiduciary duties, and to stop a contracting party from benefitting from its bad faith; (ii) sets poor precedent and policy making relative to (A) the reliance of parties on the validity of the Council's legislative acts, and (B) non-impairment or reduction of existing obligations benefitting the public; and (iii) constitutes a vain and useless act inasmuch as the rescission instrument cannot be used to release these obligations, under these circumstances. After a contract was executed, the City's vested rights cannot be disturbed retroactively.

The Council has enacted facially invalid ordinances, despite being advised against such action, raising concerns about the Council's adherence to legal guidance. The Council has inconsistently fulfilled its obligation to provide legally balanced budgets and fair exposition of redistricting, necessitating sustained vetoes and reflecting a troubling trend of decisions that undermine legal and fiscal, with more of a tendency toward politically motivated, decision-making. The Council should not be tricked into shielding the misconduct of its appointed bodies—entities over which the Council has sole authority.

Worse still, the Council allows its meetings to foster lies, protect deceit, and avoid its sole responsibility to govern GAEDA. And, perhaps worse still, the Council allows representatives to disparage, defame, and harm reputations while denying fair and equal opportunity by elected and other leaders to place truth in the record of proceedings. It is a far cry from the principles for which the original ordinance was enacted: That of *cooperative* economic development. But what can we expect from an organization living in the courtroom and losing so often on its specious or untrustworthy positions? The Council possesses both documentation demonstrating the Executive Branch's good faith (*attached*) and demonstrable evidence of GAEDA's bad faith.

For these reasons, multiple City legal counselors recommend and I do hereby **veto** this ordinance as a vain and useless act; it should have no effect on the current obligations flowing out of a valid contract. The law abhors vain and useless acts. *Alexander & Alexander, Inc. v. State, Div. of Admin.*, 486 So.2d 95, 100 (La.1986); *Parchen v. Rowley*, 196 Wash. 340, 82 P. (2d) 857 (1938).

I will still work to find a solution *without seeking unneeded court or other involvement*, but only if allowed to do so working by and through persons acting in demonstrable good faith, which has yet to be seen from GAEDA.

