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April 8, 2024

Barbara Leslie, President, Oakland Board of Port Commissioners
Members of the Oakland Board of Port Commissioners
Danny Wan, Executive Director
Mary C. Richardson, Port Attorney
Port of Oakland
530 Water Street
Oakland, CA 94607

Craig Simon
Interim Director of Aviation
Metropolitan Oakland International Airport
One Airport Drive
Oakland, CA 94621

Re: Request to Reconsider the Proposed Renaming of Metropolitan Oakland
International Airport to Avoid Legal Action

Dear President Leslie, Members of the Board of Port Commissioners, Executive Director Wan,
Interim Aviation Director Simon, and Port Attorney Richardson:

My Office represents the City and County of San Francisco (the "City"), including the
Office of the Mayor, the Board of Supervisors, and the Airport Commission, which operates San
Francisco International Airport ("SFO").

I write to join the City's strong objections to the proposed renaming of Metropolitan
Oakland International Airport to "San Francisco Bay Oakland International Airport," scheduled
for consideration at the April 11, 2024 meeting of the Oakland Board of Port Commissioners.
(See Mayor London Breed's April 8, 2024 letter; Airport Director Ivar C. Satero's April 1, 2024
letter; and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors' resolution, adopted April 2, 2024. Copies of
these documents are attached.)

I further request that the Oakland Board of Port Commissioners promptly cancel its plans
to rename its airport as currently proposed and consider a different name that does not include
the words "San Francisco." Should you continue in these efforts, I intend to pursue legal action
to prevent your use of the proposed new name.

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As you know, SFO is one of the busiest airports in the world, serving more than 50 million domestic and international passengers in 2023. SFO began operations almost a century ago in 1927, and has used the name “San Francisco Airport” or “San Francisco International Airport” throughout most of its history. The names “San Francisco Airport” and “San Francisco International Airport” are famous and highly recognizable among consumers in connection with the airport services that only SFO provides.

The City owns U.S. federal trademark registrations for the marks “San Francisco International Airport” (Reg. No. 4,189,396) and the International Air Transport Association assigned airport code SFO together with SFO's Design Registration (Reg. No. 3,329,780). The City has held these registrations for such a long time that they have become incontestable under federal law. That means they constitute conclusive evidence of the validity of the marks as well as the City's exclusive rights to use the marks. Indeed, there is and only ever has been one airport in the United States that uses “San Francisco” in its name.

Given SFO's long history with the name “San Francisco International Airport” (and previously “San Francisco Airport”), its high recognition in the marketplace, and its trademark status, the proposed new name will be very highly likely to cause confusion or mistake among consumers and the public generally. That very high risk of confusion or mistake is because consumers will either misunderstand Oakland International Airport's physical location (i.e., that it's in San Francisco rather than Oakland) or mistakenly believe that there is a formal relationship or connection between the two airports that does not exist.

More specifically, the proposed new name “San Francisco Bay Oakland International Airport” incorporates the entirety of the City's registered mark, with the first two words of the proposed name (i.e., “San Francisco”) being identical and most prominent. The location of “San Francisco” at the beginning of the name further enhances the very high likelihood of consumer and public confusion. Oakland International Airport's published statements suggest that it chose to include the term “San Francisco” in its new name to intentionally divert travelers who may be unfamiliar with the relevant geography and lead them to believe that the Oakland International Airport is located in San Francisco or has a business relationship with SFO, which it does not.

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While the proposed new name is very likely to cause confusion and mistakes broadly, the problem will be particularly acute for an audience of international travelers who may not speak or read English. Those international travelers comprise an essential part of SFO's consumer base.

For all these reasons, based on the undisputed similarity and the resulting very high likelihood of confusion between the City's registered trademark "San Francisco International Airport" and the proposed "San Francisco Bay Oakland International Airport," if you proceed with the proposed renaming, the City has strong legal claims, including, among others, federal trademark infringement and federal trademark dilution claims, and related common law and state claims for trademark infringement, that we intend to bring in court against the Port of Oakland, as a department of the City of Oakland.

Accordingly, on behalf of the City, including SFO, I request that the Port of Oakland promptly cancel its announced plans to change the name of Metropolitan Oakland International Airport to "San Francisco Bay Oakland International Airport," and consider alternatives to achieve its stated goals of increasing consumer patronage and value that avoid infringing on the City's registered trademark. I invite the Port of Oakland staff to consult with SFO staff, who are prepared to work collaboratively on alternative names that would not create confusion for consumers and the public. If the Port of Oakland instead elects to proceed with the proposed name change, then unfortunately the City will have no choice other than to pursue necessary legal action.

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Very truly yours,



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encl: April 1, 2024 Letter from SFO Airport Director Ivar C. Satero to President Leslie
April 2, 2024 San Francisco Board of Supervisors Resolution
April 8, 2024 Letter from Mayor Breed to President Leslie

cc: Mayor London Breed
SFO Airport Director Ivar C. Satero
San Francisco Airport Commission
San Francisco Board of Supervisors