



Administrative Report

H.15., File # 25-0641

Meeting Date: 5/6/2025

To: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
From: JOY A. FORD, CITY ATTORNEY

TITLE

APPROVE THE FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE ENGAGEMENT LETTER FOR LEGAL SERVICES WITH CROWELL & MORING LLP

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Seeking approval from City Council for a First Amendment to an Engagement Letter for Legal Services with Crowell & Moring LLP.

BACKGROUND

The City Attorney's office maintains a list of approved law firms and attorneys from which to select when special expertise is required on legal matters.

On December 17, 2024, the City Council approved an Engagement Letter agreement for the firm of Crowell & Moring LLP.

The lawyers at Crowell & Moring LLP have extensive litigation, land use, and environmental experience. In particular, Jon Welner, formerly with Mintz Levin has assisted the City with a number of its most challenging legal issues over the last twelve years. These include: successfully opposing the proposed construction of a new power plant at the existing AES power plant site; successfully opposing the challenge to Measure C brought by CenterCal; successfully resolving the litigation and land use disputes related to the former Redondo Beach Waterfront Project; and addressing the City's current litigation over the proposed development of the former AES power plant site. Due to Jon Welner's extensive involvement in the above-described matters, the retention of Crowell & Moring LLP is important in the continued representations for the City.

COORDINATION

First Amendment to the Engagement Letter for legal services has been approved by Crowell & Moring LLP and the City Attorney's Office.

FISCAL IMPACT

The law firm of Crowell & Moring LLP is requesting a fee increase to a "blended rate" of \$850 for all attorneys. Jon Welner (formerly of Mintz, now at Crowell) has been charging a blended rate of \$760 to the City since February 2022 (three years). Mr. Welner's standard billing rate is \$1,235; and his lowest discounted rate (other than the City) is \$990. The new blended rate of \$850 would be 31% below his standard rate and 14% below his lowest discount rate.

Submitted by:

Joy A. Ford, City Attorney

ATTACHMENTS

- First Amendment to Engagement Letter agreement for legal services with Crowell & Moring LLP
- Engagement Letter agreement for legal services with Crowell & Moring LLP