

CITY OF OAKLAND



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Office of the Mayor  
Honorable Sheng Thao

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Honorable Chair Peterson,

Thank you for the invitation to speak at the public candidate forum for Oakland's Chief of Police vacancy. After much consideration, I have decided not to participate in the forum.

I am fully invested in finding exceptional candidates for Oakland. However, a public forum does not help recruit the best candidates. A forum identifying candidates places those individuals at unnecessary risk with their current employers. It may also force Oakland to enter into a premature bidding war with an individual's current employer if they feel strongly about retaining them.

Since December, I have met several outstanding law enforcement leaders nationwide. Many expressed interest in applying for the role. Unfortunately, when presented with the prospect of a public forum, possible candidates declined or withdrew their names from consideration. While disappointing, anyone who has applied for a job can understand the sensitivity around publicly interviewing for a job while you are currently employed.

Oakland's City Charter does not require a public forum to select the Oakland police chief. Hosting a public forum is detrimental to attracting the best candidates. I will not participate in the forum for these reasons.

Thank you for your continued service. I look forward to receiving a list of Oakland Police Chief finalists from the Oakland Police Commission in March.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheng Thao". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mayor Sheng Thao  
City of Oakland