

For immediate release

BART Officers, Management Association Demand Apology From Board Director for Undermining Law Enforcement Efforts *Director Li Encourages Public to Violate the Law*

OAKLAND, CA (Nov. 11, 2019) The head of the BART police officers association and leaders of the BART police management team are demanding an apology from BART director Janice Li for participating in an anti-police protest on a train platform and encouraging the public to violate the law.

Li was among a group of people who participated in an eat-in protest on the Embarcadero platform Saturday that questioned the authority of BART police to enforce state law and the BART code of conduct -- both of which make clear that it is illegal to have food or drink in the paid areas of BART.

Li participated in the staged event even though the BART code of conduct she was protesting was approved by her own board of directors, and calls for police to intervene in the event a person refuses to cooperate.

“Li is undermining the authority of BART police by advocating lawlessness and making our job as law enforcement officers that much harder,” said Keith Garcia, president of the BART Police Officers Association. Garcia was joined in his demand for an apology by BART Police Managers Association President Jason Ledford. “BART directors approved a list of infractions and misdemeanors, now Li is ridiculing police for enforcing those very rules. Our officers deserve greater respect.”

The protest was staged in response to a video of a man on the BART Pleasant Hill platform who became belligerent and combative when approached by a BART officer who requested that he not eat inside the pay gates.

“We talk to people 100 times a day about not eating on the platform or the train and the vast majority of the time they’re understanding and simply stop what they’re doing,” Garcia said. “This person apparently had an ax to grind with police.”

Garcia noted that the video widely distributed on social media does not show many important details of the incident, including how it began.

“Our officer was at the station on a separate call when he ran into the suspect in this case, who was on the platform eating a sandwich,” Garcia said. “Our officer said to him, ‘Just a reminder there is no eating on BART,’ and the subject responded, ‘I’m not on BART, I can eat wherever the f--- I want.’

“Our officer then tells him that eating is not allowed anywhere in the paid areas, including the platform. And the subject responds, ‘F--- you, I ain’t doing nothing wrong,’ and continues to eat the sandwich directly in the officer’s face.”

When the officer asked the suspect for identification in order to write a citation for violating state law, the man refused to comply and continued to curse at the officer. The officer then requested back up.

Refusing to provide ID and being uncooperative with law enforcement is a misdemeanor. Nonetheless, the man was released after a brief detention and given only a citation.

“Our officer should be applauded for his professionalism and restraint, and for enforcing the rules that have been approved by the directors,” Ledford said. “The public has told us time and again that they’re concerned about the lawlessness on BART. Director Li should apologize to the department for not allowing our officers to the job the public deserves.”