



July 16, 2004

Via Facsimile, Email and U.S. Mail

Honorable Members of Board of Supervisors
City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Pl., Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

**RE: Budget for the City of San Francisco:
RFID Technology at the San Francisco Public Library**

Dear President Gonzalez and Members of the Board:

I write to oppose the proposed funding of the San Francisco Public Library's acquisition of a Radio Frequency Identification ("RFID") system. The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) has previously expressed its concerns about the civil-liberties risks of this expensive and unproven technology to the Library Commission as well as to this Board and its Budget Committee. EFF continues to believe that these concerns are not addressed by the current generation of library RFID systems.

EFF has also been disappointed by the Library's repeated statements about our willingness to provide input to the Library on its RFID plan. These statements seemed to be an attempt to imply that EFF endorses the RFID proposal, even though EFF does not. As a result, EFF has become reluctant to work with the Library on the RFID plan behind closed doors. Libraries are not Wal-Mart, and library RFID use is a public policy issue that deserves maximum public discussion and accountability. EFF remains willing to participate in such discussions, but only if we can openly speak about what we learn about the RFID plan and possible options.

Funding the Library's RFID system before the Library has concretely evaluated its options is likely to prejudice its merits. If the Library wishes to use RFIDs, it should evaluate the system's civil-liberties risks and possible privacy safeguards in a public, accountable way before any funds are appropriated, so that the RFID plan's merits can be considered openly and objectively. Accordingly, EFF urges Supervisor Daly to move to "zero out" the RFID budget item, as he did at the Budget Committee's July 2 meeting, and urges the Board to support such a motion.

Yours truly,

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cc: Gloria Young, Clerk, S.F. Board of Supervisors