

June 30, 2004

**VIA FACSIMILE & U.S. MAIL**

Honorable Members of the Budget Committee  
Supervisor Gerardo Sandoval, Chair  
Supervisors Chris Daly and Jake McGoldrick, Members  
Board of Supervisors  
City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Pl., Room 244  
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

Dear Chair Sandoval and Budget Committee Members:

Re: RFID Technology at the San Francisco Public Library

Dear Chair Sandoval and Budget Committee Members:

The plan of the San Francisco Public Library to pursue implementation of its Radio-Frequency Identification Device (RFID) project is currently before the Budget Committee of the Board of Supervisors. The American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California has been involved in prior discussions and meetings on this issue, and I wanted to clarify our position.

Staff Attorney Ann Brick (who is currently out of the country) has appeared at public forums and before the Library Commission presenting our views on this RFID proposal. The ACLU believes that there are serious privacy risks that are associated with this expensive and relatively new technology. We believe that these concerns cannot be addressed in the absence of a detailed and concrete proposal that will spell out the specifications of the system and provide the information needed to assess the risks to patron privacy and the adequacy of the proposed protections. As a result, the ACLU has consistently opposed official approval and implementation of the use of RFID technology at the library until city officials, public advocates and interested persons have before them the necessary information as to how the system will work, and until all of the outstanding privacy issues have been satisfactorily resolved.

This continues to be our position. We will raise our concerns with library officials and evaluate any proposed system from the perspective of its impact on patron privacy. However, we still believe that it is unwise and unnecessary for the City to authorize and fund a system such as RFID without the information that only a detailed proposal can provide.

Yours truly,

Alan Schlosser  
Legal Director

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cc: Michela Alioto-Pier, S.F. Board of Supervisors  
Tom Ammiano, S.F. Board of Supervisors  
Bevan Dufty, S.F. Board of Supervisors  
Matt Gonzalez, S.F. Board of Supervisors  
Tony Hall, S.F. Board of Supervisors  
Fiona Ma, S.F. Board of Supervisors  
Sophie Maxwell, S.F. Board of Supervisors  
Aaron Peskin, S.F. Board of Supervisors

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