MOTION

The City of Los Angeles uses many different types of proprietary software, including desktop programs and suites used by thousands of city employees such as Microsoft Office, specialized applications for financial bookkeeping, and the architecture of city servers, used and maintained by only a few employees. Each of these programs costs the city in licensing costs year after year. FY2004 software costs totaled $5.8 million.

In recent years, the "Open Source" movement has developed a model for the creation and distribution of software that sets aside the proprietary/licensing model in favor of a free and shared distribution. Users downloaded software without constraint and often make donations to sustain innovation. In some instances, users may pay for technical support, but online support is always available on message boards.

For governments, Open Source raises an important question: why should taxpayers continue to pay for licenses when equally powerful and often more secure versions are available online at no cost, supported by a community of users? This conundrum has been posed eloquently by national governments in the Third World, where conversion to open source has been underway for years. As one Brazilian official told the magazine *Wired*,

> Every license for Office plus Windows in Brazil - a country in which 22 million people are starving - means we have to export 60 sacks of soybeans. For the right to use one copy of Office plus Windows for one year or a year and a half, until the next upgrade, we have to till the earth, plant, harvest, and export to the international markets that much soy. When I explain this to farmers, they go nuts.

For Los Angeles taxpayers, cost savings from the transition to open source technology could pay for part of the long-sought expansion of the police force.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Information Technology Agency report to the Information Technology & General Services committee in 30 days on, first, what open source software is currently in use by the City of Los Angeles; second, what available open-source programs or platforms could replace existing proprietary software or operating systems, and at what savings to the city; and third, predicted transition costs in terms of learning new systems both for technicians and end users.

I FURTHER MOVE that ITA, with the Chief Legislative Analyst and the City Administrative Officer, report to ITGS within 90 days on a reasonable schedule for transitioning city computers to Open Source software and platforms, with identified cost savings to be places in the Special Fund for Efficiency Projects and Police Hiring.

CO-PRESENTED BY:

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Councilmember Eric Garcetti   Councilmember Wendy Greuel
13th District   2nd District

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Councilmember Jack Weiss
5th District