



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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City Attorney John Russo Wins Prestigious "Beacon Award" for Open Government

Oakland, CA – The California First Amendment Coalition (CFAC), a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and defending the people's right to know, recently awarded City Attorney John Russo with the prestigious "Beacon Award" in recognition of his dynamic leadership and commitment to promoting public access to government at the local and state level. According to CFAC, "Beacon awards are given to individuals or organizations that have done exemplary work in the area of keeping government meetings or records open to the public" and those "who have gone above and beyond the norm to assure government transparency."

At their annual Open Government conference this month, CFAC honored City Attorney Russo for his dedication to open government, in recognition of his following achievements:

- Helped author Oakland's "**Sunshine Ordinance**" with the League of Women Voters
- Created Oakland's innovative **Open Government Program** in the Office of the City Attorney, the first of its kind in California
- Developed the **Open Government Bill of Rights** and **Your Guide to Open Government** to inform the public of their rights under local and state law
- As President of the League of California Cities, worked hard to secure the League's support of SCA-1, a state **constitutional amendment** proposed for the November 2004 ballot to expand public access to government records and meetings statewide. The League had strongly opposed a previous version of this amendment.

"On behalf of the Open Government Program staff, I am honored that an organization like CFAC, which is dogged in the pursuit of public access to government records and meetings, has recognized our ongoing commitment to shine light on city government in Oakland," said City Attorney Russo. "I believe that to make a real difference, government records and decision-making must be visible, because by being visible we, as public servants, become accountable and credible in the eyes of the public."