



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
July 23, 2007

**CONTACT:** Erica Harrold  
(510) 238-3148

## **Governor Signs Bill to Amend Petitioners' Timeline**

**Clock for Petition Signature Collection Begins When Clerk Certifies Ordinance,  
Not With City Council Passage**

*Oakland, CA* –Today, Oakland City Attorney John Russo expressed appreciation to the State Legislature and Governor Schwarznegger for amending California State law, at the behest of the Oakland City Attorney's office, to clarify the timeline by which citizen's can petition existing laws. The Governor signed AB 1732, the Assembly Elections committee omnibus bill containing the change to local referenda circulation timeline, on Friday, July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

Under current law, a person or group that wants to use the power of referendum against a city ordinance must submit its petition signatures within 30 days of a City Council's adoption of the ordinance. The new amendment to the California Election Code ensures that referendum petitioners have a full 30 days to obtain their signatures. Under the new law, the 30-day clock for the signature gathering would start from the date a City Clerk attests to the final and full copy of the ordinance, not the date a City Council adopts the ordinance.

Last year, state law required the Oakland City Attorney's office to invalidate a petition effort by the Oak to Ninth Referendum Committee. The Referendum Committee sought to protest the Oakland City Council decision for a housing development on the Oak to Ninth waterfront. Committee members did not want to wait for the finalization of the 900+ page ordinance document and chose to circulate to the public an inaccurate version of the ordinance titled "INACCURATE – MUST BE UPDATED".

"A lot of the mistakes made by Referendum Committee leaders sprang from their fear that, with only 30 days under state law to collect signatures, they needed to move very quickly," said Oakland City Attorney John Russo. "My hope is that this new law will allow those people who care enough to engage in the process to get the time they need and that they won't feel they have to cut corners."

Text of the amendment can be found at: [http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/07-08/bill/asm/ab\\_1701-1750/ab\\_1732\\_bill\\_20070720\\_chaptered.pdf](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/07-08/bill/asm/ab_1701-1750/ab_1732_bill_20070720_chaptered.pdf)

###