Good morning Commissioners.

I want to start off by thanking you for returning to this crucial discussion - And by thanking the Commission Staff - For their thorough and encouraging report.

Before you today -
Is the task of reducing developer influence in our local government - And reckoning with a perception of corruption - That erodes the public trust.

Reform can - and must - be made. Whether it is a “humans-only” model for contributions - which I have voiced support for in the past - Or -- another way to reduce the influence of big money in our politics - I think we can all agree - that the City of Los Angeles cannot afford to put off this discussion any longer.

In my campaign for City Council - I refused all developer contributions. This was simply because they weren’t worth it. Because a single dollar from a developer - undermined the voter’s trust
Trust is the foundation of every Democracy. 
It is the life blood of a representative government - 
It is the basis of a functioning City Hall - 
And it is the only reason - any of us - are able to serve the City of Los Angeles.

Out of Many -- it is trust -- that makes us one.

But trust is a two-way street. 
We cannot demand - that voters trust their City government - 
We must build a government worth trusting in.

Right now - Democracy in Los Angeles is on life-support. 
On average - 3 out of 4 Angelenos skip their local elections. 
That should keep every official -- of our City’s Democracy -- awake at night.

Now - this is not for lack of interest. 
These are the same people that raised millions for wildfire victims - 
Turn out by the thousands for the annual homeless count - 
And take to the streets over education and equal rights.

Passion is in no short supply in Los Angeles - But trust is.

I have been warning of a collapse in public trust in Los Angeles - 
Since the day I entered office. 
A perception of corruption and pay-to-play politics - 
Fueled by the outsized influence of developer money - 
Threatens the very foundation on which we stand.
Twice - I have tried to advance legislation that would target this problem -
And Twice - I have seen this legislation go ignored -
While the problem - only gets worse.

We are now on attempt number three.
This time - we must make progress.
We must take this distrust of local government seriously -
We must bring about reform that is significant and holistic -
And that brings an end to the abuse of behested payments.

A well-crafted ban on developer donations and behested payments -
Would free the City’s decisions from a perception of bias.
It would severely limit both City officials and developers
From being able to exploit or game the system.

And most importantly - It would begin the crucial work -
Of restoring trust in Los Angeles City government.

There has been a lot of discussion on this issue.
Some have argued that restricting developer dollars won’t solve anything -
Others have said that perception alone is not enough to warrant a response.
But doing nothing - is not an option.
Doing nothing - is ignoring the crisis before us -
And Doing nothing - is costing us the trust of our City’s people.
Let us not forget - that in a democracy - power belongs to the people. They are trusting us to make the right decision. And if we fail to act - they will.

This Commission has had the opportunity to take action for two years. This has been tabled long enough - it is time to act.

We have an opportunity here to bring real reform
To Los Angeles politics -
And I believe we have a duty to the ideals of democracy - to try.

I thank you for scheduling this item today -
And I urge you to take action -
Not on behalf of any one constituency or interest group -
But for the trust of our City’s people -
And for the future health of Democracy in Los Angeles.

Thank you.