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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **City of Vernon to seek dismissal of pension lawsuit filed by former city administrator Bruce Malkenhorst**

**Vernon, CA** – The City of Vernon will seek immediate dismissal of a lawsuit filed by former Vernon City Administrator Bruce Malkenhorst when the lawsuit is assigned a judge in L.A. County Superior Court and the legal matter is placed on the court's calendar.

Malkenhorst's lawsuit seeks to restore his \$500,000 annual pension. The California Employees Retirement System (CalPERS) reduced Malkenhorst's annual pension to \$115,000 after improper compensation reporting was uncovered by the state agency. Malkenhorst's lawsuit seeks to hold the City of Vernon responsible for paying the annual pension funds he lost when CalPERS reduced his pension.

In a statement on Malkenhorst's legal maneuver delivered today to Vernon City Council members, Vernon City Attorney Nicholas Rodriguez said, "I would like to provide a short update for the public on the Malkenhorst v. City of Vernon litigation.

"First, by way of context, the present City Council has provided unfaltering moral and policy leadership in ending past abuses of power and distancing the City from the Bruce Malkenhorst era. The City has adopted new policies, procedures and safeguards to build a professional and ethical administration, and to ensure that what was done in the past will never be repeated in Vernon in the years ahead.

"The City has supported change promoted by its executive leadership. City Administrator Mark Whitworth, Interim City Clerk Dana Reed, and their respective teams have established good governance best practices in all of the city's work and services.

In the past three-years, Vernon has implemented comprehensive reforms recommended by Senator Kevin de León; John Van de Kamp, Vernon's Independent Reform Monitor; and by the State Auditor.

"The City of Vernon looks to its future. It has correctly made every tough policy and ethical decision required of it to move forward. The City has made it impossible today for someone like Bruce Malkenhorst to come into Vernon to raid its treasury as he did.

“Yet, as if in a bad dream, the hand of Bruce Malkenhorst has reached out and tried to drag the City of Vernon back into the past and away from its progress.

“First, he sued the City of Vernon and CalPERS to retain his obscene and ill-gotten pension award. Second, he appealed the dismissal of his lawsuit when his complaint was thrown out of court. Lastly, he sued Vernon directly, making the absurd claim that the City owes him an estimated \$360,000, per year, for the rest of his life.

“The shamelessness and audacity of Malkenhorst’s latest effort to enrich himself at the expense the City of Vernon has rightly caught the attention of local, state and national news media.

“As the City Council has directed us to do as your lawyers, we will continue to oppose Malkenhorst's lawsuits and deny his claims for additional funds from the taxpayers of the City of Vernon.

“Mr. Malkenhorst betrayed his oath of office. He betrayed the City of Vernon. He betrayed the City Council that served Vernon at that time. We will oppose all of Malkenhorst’s attempts to enrich himself further at the expense of this City.

“Malkenhorst's lawsuit is currently in the process of being transferred from the County of Orange where he filed his suit to the County of Los Angeles where the lawsuit should have properly been filed in the first instance. We intend to oppose it aggressively as soon as it reaches the Los Angeles County Courts.”

Malkenhorst’s lawsuit was originally filed in Orange County Superior Court. The City of Vernon challenged the Orange County court venue. City lawyers requested the lawsuit be transferred to Los Angeles County Superior Court. The city’s request was granted.

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**Vernon was founded in 1905 to create jobs in California. Vernon’s 1,800 businesses create more than 105,000 jobs in the Los Angeles area – including 55,000 jobs within the city’s 5.2-mile boundary. The Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation designated Vernon as California’s ‘Most Business Friendly City.’ Vernon generates more than \$330 million in state income and sales taxes, \$1.1 billion in taxable spending. Vernon’s businesses provide more than 4.4 billion in salaries and wages annually for workers in Los Angeles County. For more information, go to [www.cityofvernon.org](http://www.cityofvernon.org).**