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August 28, 2025

Honorable Member of the City Council
Through the Office of the Mayor
City Hall – Roosevelt Square
Mount Vernon, New York 10550

RE: Request for the adoption of a local ordinance establishing a Freedom of Information Law Compliance Policy

Dear Honorable City Council Members,

This letter respectfully requests the adoption of a local ordinance establishing a Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) Compliance policy. As you are aware, Article 6 of the New York State Public Officers Law, commonly referred to as the Freedom of Information Law, guarantees the public's right to access government records. While the City currently responds to such requests, establishing a comprehensive policy will further enhance transparency, streamline our internal processes, and provide clear guidelines for both citizens and City agencies.
The proposed policy would encompass the following key areas:

- Designation of a Records Access Officer: Formalizing the role of a dedicated Records Access Officer within the Department of Law to act as the primary point of contact for FOIL requests, responsible for receiving, processing, and responding to requests, or delegating these functions to appropriate departments.

- Establish Response Times: Defining specific timelines for acknowledging and responding to FOIL requests, adhering to and potentially exceeding the statutory five-business-day acknowledgement period, and providing a reasonable date for granting or denying access.

- Fee Structure for Reproducing Records: Establishing a transparent and equitable fee schedule for the duplication of records, if any, per state guidelines.

The adoption of this ordinance will serve the best interests of the City and its residents by promoting openness and accountability in government operations. It will standardize our FOIL procedures, minimize potential inconsistencies, and ultimately enhance public trust in our local government. This policy is considered a crucial step toward fostering a more informed and engaged citizenry. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian G. Johnson
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