Dear Honorable Committee Chair Buscaino and Honorable Members,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed modifications to the City’s tree-trimming ordinance that have been submitted to the Council by the Bureau of Street Services. Our trees are one of our most valuable civic assets. We are lucky that they’ve been passed down to us and we would be remiss in our duty if we failed to give them the best care we know how to give so that they may be passed down to future generations of Angelenos in turn. To that end, it’s essential that the City be able to exercise some oversight in how the trees are treated during trimming. The proposal submitted by BSS addresses this issue by requiring City tree surgeons to be involved in the tree-trimming process. This would require additional personnel, of course, and the proposal covers that by increasing tree-trimming fees, which, ideally would make the revised ordinance self-funding.

There are those who will argue that this would “add extra layers of bureacracy” or constitute “government interference” in the private affairs of people who trim the City’s trees. I think such arguments miss the point entirely. For instance, it’s to the benefit of all residents of the City to have sturdy safe buildings. To that end the City requires new construction to be inspected by expert City inspectors and covers the costs of those inspections via building permits. This is not to say that the contractors doing the construction aren’t experts, but just that shoddy construction affects everyone, so it’s essential to prevent it.

The same argument goes for tree-trimming. Currently the City’s trees are trimmed by many different private organizations. If they’re doing a good job, and I think mostly they are, they ought to welcome inspections (and the fees which pay for them) so that all residents of our City can feel sure that our valuable urban forest is being given the respect it deserves. To that end I urge the Public Works and Gang Reduction Committee to accept the Bureau of Street Services recommendation and forward it in its present form to the full Council for approval.

Thank you,