From:	Andrew Howard
To:	*CI-StPaul_CityClerk; #CI-StPaul_Ward1; #CI-StPaul_Ward2; #CI-StPaul_Ward3; #CI-StPaul_Ward4; #CI-StPaul_Ward5; #CI-StPaul_Ward6; #CI-StPaul_Ward7; *CI-StPaul_Mayor; Andrew Howard
Subject:	Re: SPPD"s DoJ grant proposal
Date:	Tuesday, September 1, 2026 11:50:35 AM

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Good morning Saint Paul representatives.

Please include this message in public record.

I'm writing in regard to item 26-1399 on tomorrow's (2026-09-02) consent agenda, the text of which can be found here:
https://stpaul.legistar.com/ViewReport.ashx?M=R&N=Text&GID=125&ID=6915931&GUID=AC78CB92-3DD0-447D-BEA4-EBDF56B65D2A&Title=Legislation+Text

Summarized, this item gives SPPD permission to apply for a federal funding grant from the DoJ, for the stated purpose of expanding SPPD's Drones as First Responders program.

I understand the inherent danger of a first responder entering an unknown situation, and I understand how a drone response could provide valuable information to first-responders regarding the scene they are approaching. On its surface, funding this program seems to be an obvious net-good.

However, we find ourselves in 2026, where nothing is as simple as it would seem.

In the wake of George Floyd's murder, there were widespread calls for defunding the police. Approving this consent item would do the opposite.

We live in a social climate where automated surveillance is extremely unpopular. It could be argued that these drones are used only in response to 911 calls, however I would remind you of the rampant false reports being called in by ICE agents. In practice, there is effectively no restriction on when these drones could be deployed - a false report would easily manufacture the pretense for drone deployment.

The federal government has shown extreme hostility to our state this year, and the DoJ specifically has been weaponized to punish and intimidate political enemies. I would caution against increasing our ties to this department.

The recent public hearing (2026-08-26) made clear that residents are opposed to ongoing contracts with SkyDio, largely due to their association with the ongoing genocide in Gaza, perpetuated by the state of Israel. It seems that this funding may quite possibly go toward those contracts.

Amid ongoing calls for increased oversight of our law enforcement, I feel that RES 26-1399 is excessively vague about the allowed purpose of this funding, which private entities may receive contracts from this funding, and what oversight/accountability will be established to ensure the funds continue to be used for the public's good, in line with the will of the People.

As written, I urge that this item *not* be approved. By all means, update the text of this legislation and reintroduce. But as is, it worries me.

I may no longer live in Saint Paul, but I still love the town, and I care about its future.

Thanks for hearing me out.
Andrew Howard
Former Ward 7 resident