



**GENTNER DRUMMOND
ATTORNEY GENERAL**

July 30, 2026

VIA U.S. MAIL

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Todd Blanche
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

**Re: Civil Rights Division Investigation of the City of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma
(DJ # 210-OKN-1)**

Dear President Trump and General Blanche:

I write with considerable concern regarding an investigation that career attorneys in the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice have opened against the City of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. By letter dated July 17, 2026, the Division's Housing and Civil Enforcement Section notified the City that it is investigating the City's zoning and land-use practices under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000cc, *et seq.* The predicate is a single denied rezoning application. The Division admits in its own letter that it has made no determination that federal law was violated. On that basis alone, unelected bureaucrats have served a ten-part document demand on a city of 120,000 Oklahomans and given it thirty days to respond.

Let me be abundantly clear: this investigation is federal overreach of the first order. Zoning is the quintessential exercise of the local police power. See *Rapanos v. United States*, 547 U.S. 715, 738 (2006) (plurality op.) ("Regulation of land use . . . is a quintessential state and local power."); *FERC v. Mississippi*, 456 U.S. 742, 768 n.30 (1982) ("regulation of land use is perhaps



the quintessential state activity”). The people of Broken Arrow elect a city council to make decisions about land use, traffic, and infrastructure. Those decisions are reviewable in a courtroom, under rules of procedure and proof, not by career staff in Washington who answer to no voter and who, so far as the Division’s letter reveals, launched this investigation without review or authorization by the Department’s Senate-confirmed leadership. This is precisely the deep-state reflex your Administration has pledged to root out.

The problems with the Division’s approach are several.

First, the theory of the investigation proves too much. If one denied rezoning application justifies a federal investigation, then no land-use decision by any of Oklahoma’s nearly 600 municipalities, or any municipality in America, is beyond the Division’s reach. That is not the law, and it is not a power Congress gave the Department.

Second, the demands themselves are indefensible. The Division seeks more than five years of records, including the complete application file for every place of assembly the City has considered since 2021. Worse, it demands emails, text messages, social media posts, and hearing testimony of private citizens, along with all communications concerning a January 2026 gathering of residents at a private event center. The Department of Justice is demanding that a city surrender records of its own citizens’ speech, assembly, and petitioning activity because those citizens spoke at public hearings and organized a community meeting. The First Amendment does not permit federal surveillance of Americans who participate in local government. The chilling effect of these demands is neither incidental nor acceptable.

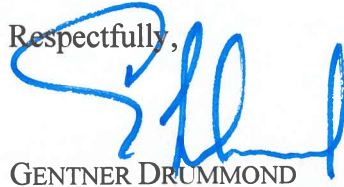
Third, RLUIPA is not a general warrant. Whether the City’s decision complies with federal law is a question for a federal court, brought by a party with standing and tested under the rules of evidence. It is not a matter for an open-ended inquisition run by the very bureaucracy whose excesses this Administration has vowed to curb.

To be clear, Oklahoma yields to no one in defending religious liberty, and houses of worship of every faith are entitled to lawful, fair, and equal treatment under our land-use laws. My office will insist on nothing less. But the Constitution protects the people’s right to self-government and open debate no less than it protects religious exercise, and we will defend both. Oklahomans will not stand by while federal officials misuse a civil-rights statute to strong-arm our cities into land-use outcomes they would not otherwise choose, or to chill the right of citizens to speak about the character and future of their communities.

Accordingly, I request that the Department: (1) withdraw or suspend the July 17 letter pending review by the Department’s political leadership; (2) require that any further investigative step be personally approved by the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights or the Associate Attorney General; (3) withdraw the demands targeting the speech and associational activity of private citizens and substantially narrow any that survive review; and (4) coordinate with my office before taking further action against any Oklahoma municipality.

The State of Oklahoma stands behind the City of Broken Arrow and its right of self-government. My office will support the City by every lawful means, and I am available to discuss this matter at the Department's earliest convenience.

Respectfully,



GENTNER DRUMMOND
Oklahoma Attorney General

cc: The Honorable Debra Wimpee, Mayor, City of Broken Arrow
Trevor Dennis, City Attorney, City of Broken Arrow



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