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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 23, 2018

### **Mayor Lumumba Releases Statement and Open Letter on Equal Business Opportunity (EBO) Standards**

There has been a great deal of discussion lately about the City's EBO policy and whether it serves minority subcontractors adequately. This administration has firmly and repeatedly stated its commitment to building the participation of Jacksonians and minorities in our contracting processes to a level that is indicative of Jackson's demographic make-up, with the intention and purpose of building a prosperous economy that benefits all of our citizens. To that end, we have been clear that our objective and stated goal is to ultimately achieve sixty percent boots on ground being Jacksonians and fifty percent of the sub-contracting make up being minority firms. This goal far exceeds prior and current standards for minority participation, not only in the City of Jackson, but nationwide. We firmly believe that ethics and public health are the drivers of our municipal leadership eco system, which means that we believe in creating policies and procedures that allow us to fully and efficiently serve Jacksonians. This also means that we have to engage in thorough and complete reviews of existing policies and procedures so that those that are not serving the interests of Jacksonians, those policies and procedures that may be self-serving, exploitative and enabling can be revised and/or augmented to help us meet our stated objectives. Our current EBO policy is one such policy.

Subcontractors often find themselves operating in environments where majority firms take advantage of loopholes and willfully fail to operate in good faith. Additionally, we are acutely aware that there is a dearth of minority firms with the capacity to take on the jobs which the city needs them to perform. Some privileged minority firms also choose not to support the mission and objectives of our minority contracting processes and do not genuinely support one another. The City of Jackson must follow the law in its efforts to increase minority participation. We will do all we can to ensure that our minority businesses have the support and resources they need to build their capacity and successfully seek City contracts. Please note that placing the city in a legally compromising position in an effort to increase minority participation will never be an option. Allowing minority firms that choose to make easy dollars and operate as "pass throughs" is not an option either. We will transform the EBO policy of this city for the benefit of its citizens and for the benefit of minority and majority firms that are sincere about ushering in principled economic development and hiring Jacksonians. We will also ensure fairness and openness are practiced across all city departments.

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