



THE PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Bill de Blasio – PUBLIC ADVOCATE

October 21, 2013

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Google Inc.
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Mountain View, CA 94043

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President
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1301 East Lookout Drive
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Tim Cook
Chief Executive Officer
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1 Infinite Loop
Cupertino, CA 95014

Dennis Woodside
Chief Executive Officer
Motorola Mobility
600 North U.S. Highway 45
Libertyville, IL 60048

Dear Mobile Manufacturers:

As the Public Advocate for the City of New York, I am writing to ask industry leaders to do their part to deter the soaring number of robberies involving mobile communication devices, including smartphones and tablets, in New York City. Despite crime reduction in many areas, our city has seen a surge in thefts involving mobile devices. We must aggressively confront this trend here and now.

In this effort, I am joining with Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, San Francisco District Attorney George Gascón, London Mayor Boris Johnson, and the Secure Our Smartphones Initiative, a growing coalition of law enforcement leaders, legislators, and consumer advocates.

Theft of Apple mobile devices alone in New York City have risen 40% in the past year. These robberies are sometimes violent – at the point of a knife or gun. These crimes are fueling a secondary market that accommodates the resale of stolen phones. Each of your companies has made representations regarding the security and safety of its products, and this is why more safeguards are needed to truly deter theft and thereby protect the safety of consumers.

In May, you were asked by New York Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman to detail your efforts to combat this growing safety problem and to collaborate to develop a comprehensive approach to discourage theft, protect consumers, and



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fulfill your expressed commitments to safety. In June, you met with members of the S.O.S. Initiative to discuss the problem and plans for a solution. In July, technical experts engaged by S.O.S. began testing the new smartphone security features recently introduced by Apple and Samsung.

While some of these new anti-theft security features are encouraging—particularly Apple’s Activation Lock—we must do more. In order to be truly effective, these security features should be widely publicized and should not require customers to opt-in or pay.

It is my understanding that a “kill switch” that would enable stolen devices to be permanently disabled is now required by law in South Korea, which demonstrates the viability of a more aggressive approach to deterring theft.

I look forward to working with you to reduce the widespread theft problem involving mobile communications devices that victimizes too many New Yorkers. In developing your responses, we ask that you continue to work with us to put the safety and security of the people of New York City your foremost priority.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill de Blasio".

Bill de Blasio

Public Advocate for the City of New York