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Trump can't 'intimidate' California in sanctuary crackdown, state's top cop says

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The U.S. Department of Justice signaled its intent Friday to follow through on a widespread immigration crackdown promised by President Donald Trump, warning "sanctuary" jurisdictions across the nation, including California, that the federal government would withhold law enforcement funds if they don't cooperate with immigration authorities.

In California, Attorney General Xavier Becerra issued a strong rebuke to the demand letter from U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions.

"California has a right to determine how it will provide for the safety and general welfare of its residents and to safeguard their constitutional rights," he said in a statement. "Fear-mongering and falsehoods will not intimidate

our state into compromising our values. Federal threats to take away resources from law enforcement or our people in an attempt to bully states and localities into carrying out the new administration's unsound deportation plan are reckless and jeopardize public safety."

In a letter sent to the California Board of State and Community Corrections, the acting attorney general for the U.S. Department of Justice, Alan Hanson, said California is at risk of losing federal funds if it does not cooperate with federal immigration authorities seeking to detain and possibly deport undocumented people.

It threatens so-called "sanctuary" jurisdictions across the state, including in Sacramento, San Francisco and Los Angeles, and could impede efforts by Sen. President Pro Tem Kevin de León to expand protections for undocumented people statewide.

"A federal, state or local government entity or official may not prohibit or in any way restrict any government entity or official from sending to, or receiving from, the Immigration and Naturalization Service information regarding the citizenship or immigration status, lawful or unlawful, of any individual," the letter said.

It directed cities and counties to prove they are complying with federal law and submit documentation by June 30.

Statewide, roughly \$20 million in federal law enforcement grant funding is at risk this year, according to Tracie Cone, a spokeswoman for

the Board of State and Community Corrections.

State corrections officials issued a brief statement saying the Board of State and Community Corrections is reviewing the letter, and that it “complies” with the federal law referenced in the Justice Department letter.

The board works closely with local law enforcement agencies, including administering police agency grants and training programs.

In a statement, De León said the state Legislature would fight back.

“It has become abundantly clear that Attorney General Sessions and the Trump administration are basing their law enforcement policies on principles of white supremacy – not American values,” he said. “Their constant and systematic targeting of diverse cities and states goes beyond constitutional norms and will be challenged at every level.”

Justice Department officials targeted eight other places. The same letter was sent to officials in New York, Chicago, Las Vegas, Miami, Milwaukee, New Orleans, Philadelphia and Cook County, Ill.

