

Jan 13, 2010

LA City Council Transportation Committee
Agenda Item, 5, Council File 09-3036

I oppose this motion and oppose this law, LAMC 80.69.4, because it is being used to criminalize homeless people who are forced to live in vehicles.

Criminalization is when people - people who often have little choice due to poverty, disabilities, and the extreme lack of affordable housing - are made into criminals by targeting them with bad laws or laws originally meant for something else, such as California Vehicle Code 22507.

This oversized vehicle law, LAMC 80.69.4, is crafted and was used in the pilot program stage specifically to make it illegal to park a motor home on a street.

Please read the LATimes article about the pilot program by the WLA VA in Council District 11
http://wetnostril.net/LATimes_Article_LAMC80_69_4.html

One might think that the oversized vehicle street signs and the other anti-homeless, anti-RV street signs are just for putting in front of some one's house to "protect" the homeowners. But anti-homeless, anti-RV street signs are put up on busy streets with no homes, in front of golf courses, by parks, in industrial zones, and in front of stinky duck ponds that the city cares nothing about.

Overnight parking is rapidly being removed throughout Los Angeles with permit parking, OPDs, and other street signs; so homeless people living in RVs are being forced to move continuously or suffer with excessive citations they can no afford to pay. This then leads to getting their vehicle towed, impounded, and lost.

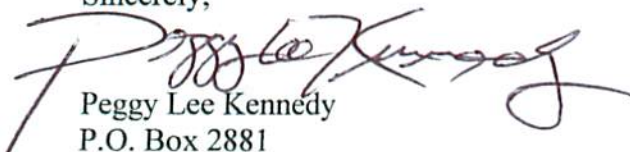
These are human beings: an eighty something year old woman with cancer, a disabled woman with kids, or a fifty-eight year old man who used to be a teacher and can not find a job.

Also, people who are homeless often have little or no income and depend on the services near where they park, like the clinic or meal programs in the Venice Coastal Zone, in order to stay alive.

Until our city can see fit to create the needed affordable and assisted housing, it should spend it's time creating safe places to park near services for the people now housed in vehicles.

The city should not kick these people when they are down by using existing laws, creating more laws, or making laws even stronger - laws like LAMC 80.69.4 – simply to move people like they are mere nuisances without any human rights or civil rights.

Sincerely,



Peggy Lee Kennedy
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January 13, 2010

Los Angeles City Council Transportation Committee

Bill Rosendahl, Chair

Tom LaBonge, Vice Chair

Richard Alarcon

Paul Koretz,

Bernard Parks

Attention: Sharon Gin - Legislative Assistant Sharon.Gin@lacity.org

Re: File [09-3036](#)

Dear Transportation Committee members:

This letter is written to express the opposition of the Venice Community Housing Corporation (VCHC) to the above-referenced motion to broaden the definition of an oversized vehicle and broaden the authority of the City and specific City Council members to deny certain sized vehicles access to public streets of Los Angeles.

The Venice Community Housing Corporation is a community based, nonprofit housing and community development corporation dedicated to the creation and preservation of housing affordable to low income people in Venice and surrounding neighborhoods. Since its formation in 1988 we have constructed, acquired, rehabilitated, own and operate 195 units of affordable housing in Venice and Mar Vista including a transitional housing facility for homeless women and their children and a recently purchased 20 unit building for permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless people with mental illness. 75% of our residents have incomes less than 50% of the median. Last year we housed 492 people, 139 of whom had previously been homeless. Since 1995 we have developed other programs and assets that address critical needs of our community including a comprehensive youth development program for "at risk" and gang affiliated local youth, after school programs for children 6-12 years old, and the first and only infant-toddler child care center in Venice that is free to low income families. VCHC also contracts with the City to provide free home repairs to low income senior and disabled homeowners living on the west side of Los Angeles through the City's Handyworker program.

I am distressed to state that VCHC views this motion as yet another attempt by the City to eliminate the "homeless problem" in Los Angeles by eliminating homeless people – eliminating them not by providing housing and supportive services that so many homeless people need, but rather by making it impossible for them to live within the City limits. It is saddening, but not surprising that this motion is authored by Councilman Rosendahl, our Council man, who VCHC has long supported and believes has genuine and heartfelt concern for the plight of people who have no home and no resources upon which to draw to secure one. There are perhaps 100 vehicles, many of them sized to be impacted by this proposed ordinance, in Venice. And there are many of Councilman Rosendahl's constituents that have lobbied hard for him to do whatever it takes to force those people out of Venice and into

someone else's neighborhood. This pressure caused him to support and the City to approve Overnight Parking Districts (OPD's) in the Coastal Zone of Venice that would have denied parking from 2-6 AM on public streets in the Coastal zone to all but housed residents who would pay a parking fee to look for street parking west of Lincoln Blvd. There, as in this case, the obvious and admitted intent of that scheme was to create a mechanism to force homeless people living in RV's out of Venice by permitting them no place to park between 2 and 6 AM. Understanding such a scheme for what it was and concluding that OPD's would unnecessarily impact the public's right of access to the beach, the Coastal Commission denied the City's application to enact OPD's in Venice.

So too in this case, any action by the City to deny "oversized vehicles" the right to park within the Coastal Zone will run afoul of the California Coastal Act unless it secures permission of the Coastal Commission before enacting such parking restrictions in Venice.

Beyond the legal limitations that the California Coastal Act imposes on the City's regulatory power, is the broader issue of the City's responsibility to provide for the health and welfare of all its residents- both those housed and unhoused!. It was recently reported that the governor's proposed budget calls for eliminating In-Home Supportive Services, CalWORKS welfare and Healthy Families programs, which provides services to millions of Californians. Such draconian cuts would inevitably result in even more homeless people, many of them women and children. And if they are fortunate enough to have a car or a camper to live in, they deserve the sympathy and support of this Council, not tickets, towing and police harassment.

It is further disturbing to VCHC, and it should also be to the City, that many homeless people suffer from mental illness. In fact it has been estimated that about 40% of the homeless population in Los Angeles are seriously mentally ill. It is reasonable to expect that a similar portion of those people living in their vehicles likewise suffer this disability. And they especially deserve the consideration and support of this Council.

For all of these reasons, the Venice Community Housing Corporation urges that this Committee and the City Council as a whole, abandon efforts, including the one before you today, to find ways to drive homeless people out of Los Angeles, and instead, use the resources you have available and the energy and talents of thousands of concerned and supportive City residents and civic organizations, including VCHC, to find real solutions to the homeless crisis in Los Angeles.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Clare
Executive Director

>>> Sue Kaplan <SAKAPLAN@CA.RR.COM> 1/13/2010 11:54 AM >>>

RE: [09-3036](#) Transportation Committee motion (Rosendahl/LaBonge for Hahn):

Dear Ms. Gin,

Since I am unable to appear in person at tomorrow's Transportation Committee meeting, please accept the following as Public Comment on Council File 09-3036, to be heard during the Transportation Committee meeting.

Councilmembers Rosendahl, Hahn and LaBonge are to be commended for their work in trying to find a solution to a difficult situation.

Please consider the following issues for inclusion in your final motion:

I ask that the committee not consider any amendments to the Ordinance before any resolution is brought on the pending dispute with the Coastal Commission.

I ask that the committee not consider this amendment before a Safe Parking Program is in place, as Councilman Rosendahl promised.

I ask that the committee not consider any amendment to the Ordinance which as with the original one has neither policy or procedure in place as to who, how and when any restrictive parking notice would or could be placed within Venice and that this decision not reside in one person's discretion.

Let us recognize that there is a problem but let us be sure that the solution being asked for is in reality equipped to solve it. The OPD ordinance, especially without any procedures on how it should be implemented is not that solution. Let us be assured that such an ordinance be neither a burden on all Venice residents including those whose circumstances have led them to be seen as a problem by the prevailing constituency.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your continuing good works.

Sincerely,
Sue Kaplan
763 Nowita Place
Venice