

June 24th, 2015

Subject: Support of Home Sharing

Dear Councilman Tom LaBonge,

I am writing to express my support of home-sharing in Los Angeles and its importance in the community. It has recently been brought to my attention that there is a growing concern about this service because California feels that there needs to be tighter regulations imposed. Many of those in favor of the dissolution of this service have pointed out a few things that have garnered some attention. They have noted instances, such as tenants collecting unreported income and Airbnb renters throwing parties on rental property. Both of these are very valid concerns and I completely agree that renters should pay taxes for any commerce, which is conducted in their households. As for loud parties, I feel that they are a nuisance, regardless of property being used as a rental. Despite being duly noted, these examples don't detract from the beauty of what this service has to offer.

Many renters and homeowners use this service because the cost of "surviving" has been increasing annually, despite the wages of many remaining stagnant in our economy. The people that use the service to rent out multiple listings around the city are definitely taking advantage of the service. They definitely aren't the norm. Most people use the service to subsidize the higher costs of "surviving" and to spread the sense of community. This is a truly remarkable service that allows people to open their homes, develop new friendships, and make rent prices more manageable in the process.

I have been traveling around the world for the last 17 years. It started as a simple passion of mine and now it is pertinent for my trade. I have never stayed in an American hotel overseas because I feel that it deters me away from the true experience of another country's culture. Hotels and motels deal with extremely large volumes of travelers that usually don't bring a high level of regard for their rooms during their short stays. I used

to stay in hostels exclusively because of the other travelers I would meet. It felt great to share experiences with others and expand my worldwide family of friends. When I learned about Airbnb, I became instantly excited because it allowed me to connect with local families and locals. It really enhances the experience when you can really connect with people in the comfort of their own homes. It provides an unparalleled connection that hotels fail to offer, despite the genuine hospitality of the hotel staff.

A great benefit of the Airbnb platform is the establishment of a community. I have created ongoing friendships with people that have remained constant. There are also instances where a guest has returned more than once because their job requires them to travel here multiple times annually. Someone is always on the premises, whether it is my roommate or myself. Our guests have always respected our home, as it were their own. Issues regarding parties or loud noise haven't been a concern because that isn't the purpose of us sharing our home with others. The same way our landlord wants us to respect our living space is the same level of respect that our guests willingly provide.

In conclusion, I ask you to please consider the great opportunity that Airbnb provides to Los Angeles residents and attach this letter to the city file. It creates friendships, ongoing relationships, and the ability for taxpayers to remain in Los Angeles to stimulate the local economy. The moment that the basic necessities of "living" become inaccessible, then it puts everyone in survival mode and the economy cannot thrive. The legalities of Airbnb can be fine tuned to make sure that income is reported, but a service like this should be allowed to thrive because of all the benefits that it brings to the table.

Sincerely,

Merlin Williams