

## Google Groups

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### 14-1635-S3, 14-1635-S2

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Debbie Hall

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Posted in group: **Clerk-PLUM-Committee**

Dear Chairperson Huizar and Members of the PLUM Committee:

I left work early to attend the meeting at City Hall yesterday. I chose to sacrifice a half day of pay to attend this meeting because this issue is incredibly important to me. I was relegated to the South Lawn and when there were about six people ahead of me; your clerk stopped the rest of us from being able to speak. In some ways, I'm glad, because I probably would've cried during my testimony. I'm a single, 51-year old professional who lives paycheck to paycheck. I returned to Los Angeles in September of 2015 after a 20-year absence and what I found upon my arrival has been daunting to say the least. I apologize for the length of this, but I ask that you please read each of my points.

I lived through the LA riots and the Northridge earthquake, and those major events were easy to overcome compared to what this city faces today. I did not expect wages to be so low and I did not expect the cost of living to be so high. I researched prior to moving back and nothing I saw indicated what I was to find when I arrived, which is an extremely economically depressed city, filled with mountains of garbage and homeless people living in public spaces, most of whom are addicted to drugs that cause them to use poor judgment and endanger people. The City of Los Angeles is not a city to be proud of anymore and we need to do a lot of work to bring it back to where it should be.

Once I returned to LA, I quickly discovered that I would now be forced to live as if I were in my 20's, with a roommate I didn't know prior to my arrival because I am unable to afford rent for a one-bedroom apartment at the rates being demanded. I actually was able to afford my own 1-bedroom apartment in my 20's – an apartment that went for \$650 in 1994 and is now \$2,250. I refuse to live like this for much longer and I will have no choice but to leave Los Angeles again because it's simply untenable.

The comments I planned to make are as follows:

1. The sea of blue shirts at yesterday's hearing represents apartments that are off the market for long-term renters. This is a situation of David vs. Goliath and AirBNB is Goliath, spending millions to push their agenda to City Hall. Numerous speakers were promoting AirBNB as the only way they can afford to keep their homes. They shouldn't **have** to bring strangers into their apartment or home, especially single-mothers, just to make ends meet. The solution to their problem isn't AirBNB; the solution to their problem is a manageable cost of living. The wages here are as low as they are in South Carolina, where I'm from, yet the cost of living is quadrupled. These single-mothers are putting themselves and their children at risk by bringing strangers into their homes and by granting AirBNB any platform in Los Angeles, you are perpetuating the problem. AirBNB is

essentially the pimp and the hosts who are forced to rent a room in their homes to make ends meet are the exploited hookers. Please stop this cycle and ban this practice.

2. We heard repeatedly how AirBNB “wasn’t our first choice” from people forced to use the service to supplement income. Great – please give these people other options then!
3. The absentee owners who host AirBNB in detached bungalows or in second homes should not have the ability to host AirBNB at all. This is a commercial endeavor in residential zoning. You open the City up to all sorts of liability by allowing this in zoning-restricted areas.
4. You have admitted RSO-protected renters as AirBNB hosts, as we saw yesterday, and there is absolutely no way to enforce against this now or in the future unless AirBNB is completely outlawed. That is an apartment that I could be living in yet it’s off the market because you have a tenant breaking the rules. Rent Stabilization may as well not exist if AirBNB is given a legal platform to do business in Los Angeles.
5. If there is one address per host, there is nothing to prevent companies from forming multiple LLCs or couples and families to appoint one person per listing and list multiple units listed on AirBNB. You had at least one absentee AirBNB host who discussed how neighbors don’t complain – how would they even know how to reach him?
6. You are throwing millions of dollars at the homeless crisis in this city instead of addressing one of the main causes of homelessness, which is AirBNB. AirBNB has depleted the pool of available long-term rentals, causing the rental rates to go sky high in the last five to six years. We’ve seen homelessness skyrocket during that same timeframe. We should be preventing homelessness by addressing the causes (AirBNB, predatory employers who exploit workers, mental illness and addiction, making it easy to camp out on sidewalks, in public parks or under freeways).
7. You’ll notice that not one person who was an AirBNB host discussed how much money they charge per night. There were people who referred to this as “their business.” This is not ok. These are residentially zoned dwellings being used as commercial enterprises. You had a woman from Laurel Canyon who limits her house rental to 12 people. That is a party house! This is not acceptable on any level.
8. The very last speaker was a young, well-dressed white woman who was there with her well-dressed, older boyfriend who spoke immediately before her. You heard her discuss the fact that she was a superhost, along with her realtor boyfriend. You heard her say how he was able to fly to visit his (adult) children on the East Coast because of the income derived from AirBNB.

What you didn’t hear was her exercising her privilege by approaching the police to complain about a Latina woman whom she’d accused of cutting in line (when she actually just went to the restroom), demanding they remove the Latina woman, and making racially-charged, derogatory comments about the Latina woman’s accent and what she had to say as the woman was speaking

to the committee about the 3 jobs she works in the hospitality industry.

Though the nastiness of the woman in line seems irrelevant on the question of AirBNB, it is indicative of a culture of entitlement that is prevalent among AirBNB hosts and I wanted you to know that is who you're defending when you rule on the side of AirBNB.

I maintain that AirBNB be given absolutely no rights in this market until we have a more sustainable economy for EVERYONE in Los Angeles. I propose that AirBNB be banned completely as there is no reasonable way to enforce the violations that are sure to occur if it's allowed on a limited basis. Santa Monica was justified and smart to restrict AirBNB all the way. **I have a funny feeling that if we tell AirBNB that we'll only allow them to do business here when our homeless population falls to under 500, we'd see that company invest in reducing our homeless population. Put the burden on them. AirBNB is worth \$31 billion** (<http://www.cnn.com/2017/03/09/airbnb-closes-1-billion-round-31-billion-valuation-profitable.html>). If a complete ban is not acceptable to the committee, then we need a very strict limitation of 90-days or less, a way to ensure that multiple LLCs aren't created to have multiple properties listed by the same people, very comprehensive and strict enforcement plans, and a neighborhood council vote on whether they are willing to accept short term rentals in their midst. Using one's driveway as an auto repair shop would be a great way to supplement one's income, but if it affects your neighbors' quality of life, it's not something that should be approved. AirBNB is no different.



Airbnb just closed a \$1 billion round and became profitable in 2016

[www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com)

Airbnb anticipates it will be profitable in 2017 after making money late in 2016, a source close to the company tells CNBC.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Debbie Hall

District 13

843-276-5377