

6th April 2015

Dear Council Member Bonin and the LACC

I'm writing as an Airbnb host in support the use of Home sharing in Venice where I live.

My points in favor of Home Sharing are as follows:

I have used other forms of finding renters in Venice and have had terrible trouble with people. People are all individuals and bring an awful lot of personal baggage when they move into your space. After having been an Air bnb host for three years I have never had a problem with a guest. Not in their behavior, cleanliness or financially. This is because Air bnb have a fantastic system where both sides are accountable for their behavior. The money is dealt with through a third party so there's never any embarrassment or confusion on that front. People behave themselves, because they have to.

Safety: Again if there is a problem with a guest, you can contact someone at air bnb immediately and get help. But, I don't think that's the only reason for feeling safe with Airbnb guests in my home. For some reason Airbnb hits an interesting demographic of people. They all tend to be well educated, not worried about staying in someone's home, therefore quite open and friendly and have money. Its easy and a very pleasant experience.

Are the hotels suffering from people using Airbnb? Since a room in a hotel in my area is roughly 500 - 600+ Dollars a night - I really can't see how we are taking any business away from these hotels; I charge 70 dollars a night. I would say 90 percent of the people I have staying are people who say they otherwise wouldn't have made the trip, so in an area of Los Angeles where middle class people are already priced out of a holiday, I can only see air bnb as a good thing. These air B nB guests are not the same group of people booking into Hotels or youth hostels. Airbnb affords these people the chance to stay in an area which otherwise would only be available to the really wealthy - in addition to continuing to boost the local economy by spending their dollars while they are here.

Is Airbnb causing local rents to go up ? When I moved here six years ago - pre Airbnb this was happening anyway. The arrival of Whole foods in Venice marked the beginning of the gentrification of Venice. The travelers trucks were moved away from Rose Avenue and rents started to rise, not with the emergence of home sharing, but with a natural gentrification that was starting to happen anyway. The

really high hike in Rental prices happened with the arrival of the tech people. And I quote from TIME magazine:

'Such is life in Silicon Beach, a stretch of roughly four miles from Venice to Santa Monica that has become the heart of Los Angeles' fast-growing tech scene. Thanks in part to Hollywood's proximity and a climate that sells itself, there are some 800 startups in the area that have attracted about \$1.3 billion in venture capital since 2011, according to a report from PricewaterhouseCoopers and the National Venture Capital Association. Silicon Beach's ranks include social-media companies like Whisper and Snapchat, which reportedly turned down a \$3 billion acquisition offer from Facebook in 2013. And that's not the only attention the area has drawn from its namesake 400 miles to the north. Google occupies 100,000 sq. ft. of Venice office space, including some in the iconic Frank Gehry-designed Binoculars Building. Facebook opened an office in nearby Playa Vista in 2012.'

With Millions of dollars being newly introduced to the area by companies like Google and Yahoo, I find it very hard to believe that Home Sharing is the cause of Rent increases in this area. Its clearly visible on the streets what is happening - Clever real estate companies and architects have knocked down many of the old existing craftsman's houses and have been building large modern units and charging hefty sums for them - and there's a huge demand for them now from the tech companies. Which leads me on to my next point:

Supporting the local community: So Airbnb has actually been supporting the local population rather than damaging it. Enabling many people to stay in their homes or rent in a beautiful area they would otherwise not be able to afford.

I have made life long friends through Airbnb. I now have friend all over France, Germany, Spain, South America, Denmark, Iceland, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand. How can this possibly be deemed a bad thing?

Keeping standards up. There is a very strict review system on Airbnb, which keeps you on your toes. Its never nice having a less than perfect review but Airbnb are very hot on keeping the review system honest - unlike the on line reviews on Yelp which can be taken down or re written. I recently stayed in Madonna Inn in San Louis Obispo, and was astonished to find blood on the comforter, I have to say that would never happen in an Airbnb house - if it did you d get a terrible review and no one would stay with you.

So my argument is that I think Airbnb should stay, it benefits everybody. It keeps people safe, and accountable.

I think home sharing is the future of low cost travel and these kinds of enterprises should be supported by those in power rather than bullied out of existence by large companies or small-minded individuals. It's a great thing being connected to different cultures and peoples through this site; getting rid of it or restricting it would be squashing the instinctive Human spirit of connection and enterprise, the very human spirit that America was founded on and still thrives.

We live in a democratic, capitalist society. It is completely undemocratic to allow again, these large hotels and small-minded individuals to bully individual people like this. We live in a capitalist society, the benefits of which have been reaped for decades by these large companies. I was under the impression that the very definition of capitalism was to encourage free enterprise thereby igniting healthy competition - which in turn keeps prices at a natural affordable level. But with no competition these hotel can keep the prices at exorbitant and unrealistic levels for the working person; the very people who have come to enjoy Airbnb and its hosts. I think it would be really damaging and a great shame to dismantle such a wonderful thing.

sincerely

Sarah C

Venice resident, Airbnb host.