



December 7, 2018

The Honorable Eric Garcetti
Mayor of Los Angeles
200 N Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

SUBJECT: Ban on Public Events in Aircraft Hangars - CONCERNS

Dear Mayor Garcetti,

The Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA) is writing to express its strong concerns regarding recent Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety (LADBS) changes automatically denying Temporary Special Event permits (TSEs) to aircraft hangars, especially the implementation at Van Nuys Airport (VNY). We urge the City of Los Angeles to undertake the following steps:

- Deferment of implementation with appropriate safeguards at the Van Nuys airport (VNY) and LAX until adequate notice is given (180 days),
- Set standards to create a formal review and permitting process that protects public safety, and
- Establish a clear distinction between hangars and warehouses.

While VICA understands and respects the grave danger that illegal warehouse use can pose to members of the public, as evidenced by the tragic Ghost Ship Fire in Oakland, public events in aircraft hangars are very different. Operators have a long history of hosting events which have been vetted by LAFD in hangars, which are wide-open spaces with clear exit doors.

Deferment of implementation

VNY tenants had applied in good faith for approval from the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) and VNY for events. Neither LAFD nor VNY were aware of the moratorium on TSEs for these events.

Though previously unaware of their responsibility to enforce the moratorium, on December 4, 2018, the LAFD announced that they will begin enforcement at VNY immediately. Any event without a permit will be shut down and the permitting agency will be fined up to \$5000. Operators had been acting in good faith, seeking approval from the airport and LAFD. An abrupt ban on events without any type of warning or public engagement is simply unfair and will cost businesses thousands of dollars to put up tents or find alternate arrangements.

VICA is extremely concerned with the short-term impact of this moratorium, including the threat to shut down events in the next few days which had been planned for months. We urge City of LA to identify appropriate safeguards on a temporary basis to allow events to move forward as planned until a more reasonable formal review process can be established.

A formal review and permitting process

Operators around the country regularly hold events in hangar space. An outright ban on all of these events is outrageous and will hurt local businesses when a sensible review and permitting process could allow these events while protecting public safety.

A ban makes no distinction between a new hangar with the latest life safety features and an old hangar. It seems extremely reasonable that LADBS could permit these events and allow LAFD to work with the operator to create a reasonable safety plan on a case-by-case basis. An outright ban will drive business to other nearby cities which permit these popular events.

A clear distinction between hangars and warehouses

There is a big distinction between a crowded warehouse and a wide-open hangar, and that difference should be reflected in City of Los Angeles and state classifications. During events, operators clear hangars of most items which are not directly related to the event. Due to strict fueling safety standards, aircraft fuel and other hazardous materials are not situated near hangars. It seems only sensible that these two very different structures are treated differently for the purposes of TSEs.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue.

Sincerely,



Lisa Gritzner
VICA Chair



Stuart Waldman
VICA President

Cc. The Honorable Nury Martinez, Los Angeles City Council
Frank Bush, General Manager, Department of Building and Safety
Deputy Chief Kristin Crowley, Fire Marshal, Fire Prevention & Public Safety Bureau