

Communication from Public

Name: Alex Fierro-Clarke

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 12:30 PM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: My name is Alex and I strongly support the Healthy LA Coalition in calling for putting the Vacancy Tax on the ballot for Angelenos to vote on. A Vacancy Tax will provide much needed revenue to the city at a time when revenue sources that the city is most dependent on will be considerably less than prior years because of COVID-19. The number of people living outside and in their cars has increased 14.2% in the past year, without the economic effects of COVID-19 taken into account. There are over 100,000 vacant housing units in the City of Los Angeles according to the most recent census bureau data. If they were released into the rental market, they could substantially help stem the tide of rent burdening and houselessness that afflict Angelenos. Implementing a Vacancy Tax policy could help stem the massive tide of evictions projected to occur after the COVID-19 related emergency renter protections are lifted. This must go on the ballot for the constituents to vote on. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 12:34 PM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: I strongly oppose the proposal to place a vacancy tax on the November 2020 ballot.

Communication from Public

Name: Peter Herzog

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 02:30 PM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: Please see the attached letter and place it into the Council record..



COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION
SoCal Chapter

June 15, 2020

Council President Nury Martinez and City Councilmembers
City of Los Angeles

Sent via Email

Re: Vacancy Tax Discussion – Council File # 19-0623 – Agenda Item 33

NAIOP, the Commercial Real Estate Development Association, is the leading national organization of developers, owners, and related professionals in office, industrial and mixed-use real estate. The NAIOP SoCal Chapter serves Los Angeles and Orange Counties, and is the second largest chapter in the United States with a membership of over 1,000 members.

Everyone understands the need to address the housing shortage in Los Angeles County and really in the State. Yet, any efforts, must be well thought out to avoid unintended consequences. As the Chief Legislative Analyst strongly points out in the memo dated June 8, 2020;

"Given the complexity of a vacancy tax and the several policy points..., Council may wish to study the issue further for consideration in 2022."

And the reasons for doing so are many, again as outlined by Ms. Tso. Just a few examples;

(1) "...there is minimal information on its efficacy and clarity on whether the tax...will result in anticipated outcomes.";

(2) "...the Oakland model has only been recently been implemented and further study of its actual collection of revenue and impact on filing vacancies are yet to be determined."

(3) "A potential new tax could benefit from the input of community stakeholders, renters, property owners, and the business community."

(4) "Due to the dramatic shift in the local, regional and national economy as a result of COVID-19, our office recommends that city staff assess any expected shift in projected revenues..."

There is also the cost of approximately \$12 million to add an initiative on the November, 2020 ballot at a time where actual cuts to the city budget may be necessary.

We are in truly in unprecedented economic time due to the ordered shutdown of the economy as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also clear we have no idea the extent of any economic recovery or when it might actually occur. This adds tremendously to the numerous uncertainties set forth by the Legislative Analyst. To add an additional cost of a vacancy tax at a time when people are just trying to get by seems to not be good public policy, and could very easily be harmful.

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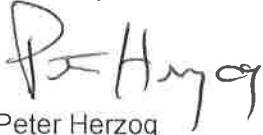
Vickie Talley, Director of Legislative Affairs

Peter Herzog, Asst. Dir. of Legislative Affairs

It is impossible at this point to provide substantive input or suggestions regarding this concept. It is in fact only a concept at this point with few details with way more questions than answers. Additionally, there is reference to a Blue Sky report. We are currently not aware of any stakeholder who has seen it. This means a key report that supposedly is a key foundation for moving ahead has not even been given to the public. The time to put this on the ballot is very short, 14 days. There is obviously insufficient time to develop the necessary information needed to truly analyze this concept, and work with all the appropriate stakeholders on this issue.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the City Council needs far more time to truly analyze the Vacancy Tax concept, and to work with the actual stakeholders who would be impacted by such a tax. Thus, we do respectfully request that this concept not be placed on the November, 2020 ballot.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "P. Herzog". The signature is stylized with a large initial "P" and a cursive "Herzog".

Peter Herzog
Assistant Director of Legislative Affairs

Communication from Public

Name: Elizabeth de Carteret

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 02:31 PM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: I urge you to not continue on Item 33 on the Tuesday, June 16th agenda. Property owners are always the first targeted when there is a budget deficit. This is not the right time to consider another TAX on them. Property owners and housing providers are hurting, tenants aren't paying rent, and they are struggling. We are already on the path of losing housing stock due to owners being forced to sell and get out of the market. This TAX will be final nail in the coffin to many of them. Mom and Pop owners have been squeezed by statewide rent control, eviction restrictions, as well as further restrictions in the city of L.A, attacks on Prop 13 and Costa Hawkins. Stop over-regulating housing providers and property owners. This problem can't be solved by more regulations like a vacancy TAX. Let's work together to find a way to fill vacant units and support our housing providers during this challenging time.

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 02:32 PM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: Please do not pass Agenda Item 33 of Council File 19-0623. Our family owns a small apartment building in Silver Lake and this would negatively affect us and many, many other owners. Passing this in the time of COVID-19 would cause owners further financial problems. We have bills to pay and we are already under stress. Please be considerate of apartment owners--we need help!

Communication from Public

Name: June Fletcher

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 02:33 PM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: My name is June Fletcher and I strongly support the Healthy LA Coalition in calling for putting the Vacancy Tax on the ballot for Angelenos to vote on. A Vacancy Tax will provide much needed revenue to the city at a time when revenue sources that the city is most dependent on will be considerably less than prior years because of COVID-19. The number of people living outside and in their cars has increased 14.2% in the past year, without the economic effects of COVID-19 taken into account. There are over 100,000 vacant housing units in the City of Los Angeles according to the most recent census bureau data. If they were released into the rental market, they could substantially help stem the tide of rent burdening and houselessness that afflict Angelenos. Implementing a Vacancy Tax policy could help stem the massive tide of evictions projected to occur after the COVID-19 related emergency renter protections are lifted. This must go on the ballot for the constituents to vote on. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: Mrs Bonitatis

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 02:19 PM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: As a registered voter and taxpayer I'm against any new tax increases and will vote against any new taxes for the upcoming November ballot to fund affordable housing/homeless issues. I guess the \$1.2 billion from Prop HHH wasn't enough for you all? Ridiculous stop taxing us, you are forcing residents to move out of our state!

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 03:12 PM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: This measure, on top of measures restricting rental property owners' control of their properties during the COVID-19 pandemic is another step to add to the financial and managerial burdens of rental property owners. Controls on supply and demand just do not work and will negatively distort the economy. It is nice to consider forcing the provision of more housing, but those who cannot afford to rent an apartment are unlikely to be able to afford renting a house, houses seeming to be the focus of this initiative. I have 2 apartment rental units for rent that have so far remained vacant for over 1 month because people just are not interested in moving with the current health crisis, despite lowering the asking price 2 times so far. I have another unit that will be up for rent this week and expect the same problem. This initiative is simply another unworkable solution to add to the unworkable solutions forced on rental property owners within the last 2 months and should not be allowed to continue. It also would add another unneeded and costly bureaucracy to the long list of such bureaucracies.

Communication from Public

Name: Bert

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 03:14 PM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: As to Vancouver, most of the vacancies were in the 4 and 5 star homes (as defined by you) and many of the foreign national owners hired 3rd party services to sign month to month leases (which were offset by a management contract) to lease the units, apply for water and power, turn a light on and off - and generally keep the units empty and avoid the taxes. Additionally, I am at a loss for the math that leasing up ultra high cost units will somehow create much more affordable housing. it will bring in much needed revenue, but the City hasn't been very good at using that money for low income housing. Also wondering how a net positive \$145M estimate per year in taxes has no affect on general budget (maybe that isn't what you meant?). Also, unclear is if you are still planning to include residential commercial and vacant land? How many vacant parcels of land are owned by the City? How are you planning on handling those? I can't find that information on any recent memos (apologies if I missed it). Possibly you already plan to quickly develop those into affordable housing to take the pressure off the homeless population. L.A. Times reported in 2018 <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-kelly-los-angeles-city-owned-land-20180617-story.html> that; "Overall, City Hall's current approach to its real estate portfolio, worth an estimated \$3 billion, is fragmented and balkanized. Too many departments and agencies handle the decision-making, policies, budgets, management and operations for L.A.'s unwieldy collection of assets." So, possibly start with your own portfolio? Another interesting article (since you quote articles in your taxpayer paid reports, you should add these) <https://la.curbed.com/2019/7/3/20681291/map-public-property-los-angeles> "Parcels owned by six public agencies are shown on the map: city, county, state, federal, Metro, and LAUSD. Of Los Angeles's 792,000 properties, about 14,000 properties are owned by those six agencies, including 7,508 properties owned by the City of Los Angeles."

Communication from Public

Name: Horace H Heidt

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 03:29 PM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Councilmembers: I am an apartment house owner and have fought to build a multi-unit building on my property for over seven years. I have spent over two million dollars on plans, drawings, permits, in-lieu fees, and am now unable economically to build housing which is desperately needed. Bureaucratic delays and superimposed conditions have resulted in my inability to build the project. I have paid interest for financing and now have five vacant lots upon which this multi-unit project was to be built on. Thus, I'm not only am out over two million dollars, but now am faced with the possibility that I will be taxed on the vacant lot – which became unbuildable and are now vacant and I apparently will be taxed because the land is vacant. This situation is unconscionable and outrageous! Regarding being taxed on vacant apartments may have a rational basis on units in New York with absentee owners, it has no justification for multi-unit properties in California. It is insane to tax vacant apartments in southern Californiabbelieving that a rational property owner would voluntarily withhold a rental unit. I am not alone. Most multi-family owners believe the same thing and levying a tax on vacant units will not remedy the housing crisis. With all due respect, property owners are struggling to maintain their properties, collect rents from economically weakened tenants and pay all taxes and insurance on their properties. This motion will negatively impact innocent struggling and reputable landlords from surviving and will result in reductions in building housing, maintain existing housing and will depress values and economic benefits to the community. Thank you for your attention to this matter. Horace H. Heidt Housing Provider

Communication from Public

Name: Will

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 03:48 PM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: I fully support the city council advancing a vacancy tax to the November ballot. This will help renters find affordable housing.

Communication from Public

Name: Danielle Leidner Peretz

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 03:53 PM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: Public comment for Council File 19-0623.



"Great Apartments Start Here!"

Danielle Leidner-Peretz
Director, Government Affairs &
External Relations
danielle@aagla.org
213.384.4131; Ext. 309

June 15, 2020

Via Electronic Mail

Members of the Los Angeles City Council
City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Re: Council Files 19-0623 – Vacancy Tax and Empty Homes Penalty (Agenda Item 33)

Dear Members of the Los Angeles City Council:

At tomorrow's June 16th City Council meeting, the City Council will consider the advancement of a vacancy tax measure for consideration by the voters during the November 2020 election or alternatively review the matter more comprehensively for consideration on the 2022 ballot. The Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles (AAGLA) strongly opposes the imposition of a vacancy tax and urges the Council to reject placement of such a measure on the November 2020 ballot.

One year ago, the Council directed the Housing and Community Investment Department (HCID+LA) and the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA) to report on the amount of vacant housing units in Los Angeles and examine the vacancy taxes in other jurisdictions, respectively. This past week, both reports were publicly released on June 8th and June 11th. Within a week of the release of these reports, with minimal opportunity for key stakeholder engagement and thoughtful review, the Council is contemplating placement of a vacancy tax on the November 2020 ballot. Both reports raise questions that necessitate further assessment.

The HCID+LA report indicates that "there is no one reliable source of vacancy data" and that their analysis "includes all vacant units and does not distinguish between units that have been rented but not occupied and units that are currently for rent or sale". While the HCID+LA report provides the methodology for how they arrived at their vacancy rate estimate and a brief review of several other jurisdictions that have adopted a vacancy tax; the report lacks a detailed analysis of the various reasons for why a unit may be vacant, and the impacts and/or challenges encountered by jurisdictions that have imposed a vacancy tax.

Moreover, the CLA report states "given the complexity of a vacancy tax and the several policy points that must be decided, including the definition of "vacancy", appropriate tax rates, exemptions,



"Great Apartments Start Here!"

and owner characteristics, limited data to assess the efficacy of such a tax on the City, and outstanding legal challenges related to this matter, Council may wish to study the issue further for consideration in 2022". The CLA report repeatedly highlights the difficulties in evaluating the long-term impacts of a vacancy tax due to the relatively recent establishment of such measures in other jurisdictions coupled with the current economic circumstances and legal challenges. Equally concerning is that the CLA report includes information and recommendations based on a "Blue Sky" study which is not attached or otherwise publicly available.

We are in the middle of an unprecedented global pandemic that is continuously evolving. In response the City Council has instituted an eviction moratorium in place since March with a twelve-month deferred rent repayment period and a rent increase freeze effectively imposed for well over a year. Owners are experiencing severe financial challenges in meeting their current financial obligations, ongoing essential building maintenance and property tax payments. Imposing a new tax on homeowners and housing providers will predictably result in a loss of the City's much needed affordable housing as owners facing ongoing financial constraints are compelled to exit the rental housing business.

While all the above concerns warrant halting the placement of a new tax on the 2020 ballot, the \$12 million cost to the City to place this initiative on the ballot, as estimated by the City Clerk in a letter dated June 12th to the Council, should alone cause the Council to pause. This \$12 million, could be allocated for critical needs, not to cover the cost of placing the measure on the ballot, with no guarantee that it would result in voter approval. Given the recent defeats of several tax related ballot measures, it seems fiscally imprudent to be spending a significant amount of City funds for this purpose when such funds could be better utilized for assisting City residents and businesses struggling due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, serious economic instability ahead, the limited opportunity for stakeholder feedback, the clear need for further assessment, and an immediate cost to the City of \$12 million, we urge the City Council to reject placement of this measure on the 2020 ballot.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these matters. If you have any questions, please call me at (213) 384-4131; Ext. 309 or contact me via electronic mail at danielle@aagla.org.

Very truly yours,

Danielle Leidner-Peretz

Danielle Leidner-Peretz

Communication from Public

Name: Aaron Taxy

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 04:18 PM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Honorable President Martinez and Members of the City Council, Attached is a letter on behalf of the Building Owners and Managers Association Greater Los Angeles addressing Agenda Item 33. Thank you, Aaron Taxy

The Honorable Council President Nury Martinez & Los Angeles City Council
200 N. Spring St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

June 15, 2020

Dear Honorable President Martinez and Members of the Los Angeles City Council,

I write on behalf of the Building Owners and Managers Association Greater Los Angeles (BOMA/GLA), which represents over 135 million square feet of commercial office space throughout Los Angeles County and whose members contribute \$3.5 billion to California's economy.

Addressing Agenda Item 33, I write requesting the Council refrain from placing a tax on vacant and underutilized properties onto the November 3, 2020 ballot. A vacancy tax on commercial property is wholly unnecessary and unfairly punitive, given current economic conditions. Moreover, the long-term effects of a vacancy tax remain unknown.

Behind a vacancy tax on commercial properties is a fundamental assumption that, left to their own devices, property owners would otherwise strive to leave rentable space vacant. Yet nothing could be further from the truth – property owners are very motivated, especially in these unprecedented times, to keep existing tenants and lease vacant space as soon as possible. If your business model is to rent space to other businesses, vacant space is devastating. Even without a tax, property owners have substantial financial interest in filling vacant spaces. A vacancy tax is therefore unnecessary and unfairly punitive.

A vacancy tax would be even more problematic in the aftermath of the COVID-19 emergency. Like most businesses, commercial properties are experiencing the pain of the recent economic downturn. Businesses who lease space are going out of business, usually with no new business coming in to replace them. Rental income is drying up and fears about being able to meet basic obligations such as mortgages and payroll are growing. These market conditions are beyond the control of property owners and are hurting them immensely. A tax increase on commercial property owners trying to stay afloat during this economic downturn would be devastating enough. But effectively increasing their tax burden *because* of the economic downturn is both unfair and irresponsible.

We are therefore deeply concerned about a vacancy tax on commercial properties.

Our own concerns about this vacancy tax aside, the Council should also refrain from placing this tax on the 2020 ballot to fully consider its impact.

In their assessment of this initiative, the City's Legislative Analyst noted that most vacancy taxes in cities across North America are relatively new, leaving their long-term fiscal and economic impacts unknown. Furthermore, [stories are already emerging](#) in cities such as Oakland on the unintended consequences of vacancy taxes. Rather than rushing a vacancy tax to the 2020 ballot, Los Angeles should further consider its options while understanding its impacts elsewhere.

Most importantly though, withholding this tax from the 2020 ballot would provide the City with the time to seek comprehensive input from property owners, tenants, and outside experts. Rather than defaulting to a vacancy tax

to address perceived problems in Los Angeles, our City Council should leave no stone unturned to find creative solutions to our shared challenges.

If you do, BOMA/GLA stands ready to help.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Aaron Taxy
Director of Government and Public Affairs
Building Owners and Managers Association Greater Los Angeles
(213) 332-4776
ataxy@bomagla.org

Communication from Public

Name: Joseph Lightfoot

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 06:00 PM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Council Members: I urge you to follow the recommendation of the CLA and delay putting this measure on the 2020 ballot so it may be studied further. It is not at all clear that a vacancy tax would fulfill the stated purpose of increasing the availability of affordable units. The HCIDLA report is clear that the preponderance of vacancies is in the high end of the market. The vacancy rate for affordable units is already below 5%. An additional tax would not be likely to lower that rate. It's difficult to imagine that the rate in this housing segment could be any lower. If the council's intention is only to raise revenue to fund other housing priorities, you should be transparent about that and not try to obscure your real intention behind a goal that this proposal is unlikely to achieve. Though the authors of the HCIDLA report disclaim the validity of their research to support any actions other than those they prefer, their report fairly screams that what is needed is the construction of affordable units in lower-income neighborhoods. That will solve the affordability problem. There are not a sufficient number of vacant units fill up in low-income neighborhoods to make a dent in the problem. A vacancy tax might provide some minor relief in the vacancy rate, but it's foolish, and a dereliction of your responsibility to all of the parties in the LA housing market, to take the easy way out by attempting to tax without a solid justification based on sober deliberation. This proposal addresses the funding side of the problem, but does absolutely nothing to address the actual lack of affordable units.

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 05:49 PM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: I support the Healthy LA Coalition in calling for putting the Vacancy Tax on the ballot for Angelenos to vote on. Not only will this tax provide the city with revenue during the COVID-19 pandemic, but will also provide a way to protect Angelenos from exacerbating rent burden and take a step in preventing the houselessness. Let the Vacancy Tax go to ballot this November.

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 09:54 PM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: I strongly support the Healthy LA Coalition in calling for putting the Vacancy Tax on the ballot for Angelenos to vote on. A Vacancy Tax will provide much needed revenue to the city at a time when revenue sources that the city is most dependent on will be considerably less than prior years because of COVID-19. The number of people living outside and in their cars has increased 14.2% in the past year, without the economic effects of COVID-19 taken into account. There are over 100,000 vacant housing units in the City of Los Angeles according to the most recent census bureau data. If they were released into the rental market, they could substantially help stem the tide of rent burdening and houselessness that afflict Angelenos. Implementing a Vacancy Tax policy could help stem the massive tide of evictions projected to occur after the COVID-19 related emergency renter protections are lifted. This must go on the ballot for the constituents to vote on. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: Thomas Hagerman

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 09:59 PM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: No more taxes, time for you bozos to live within your means like everybody does. Especially after you politically trashed the economy that supports you.

Communication from Public

Name: BERNARD FLIEGELMAN

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 10:01 PM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: This is for Agenda Item 33 – Council File 19-0623 This is from L.A. Times Opinion of Apr 15, 2020 Most landlords are small-business owners who rely on rent payments for their income or retirement. Nearly three-quarters of apartment properties in the U.S. are owned by individuals, not corporations or investor groups, and most apartment buildings have only a handful of units. In California, about half of rentals are in properties with five units or less. If two tenants in a small complex can't pay the rent, that's a serious financial hit. There's a real concern that the financial toll caused by lost rental income could prompt landlords to sell their properties in droves. That could also hasten the shift from mom-and-pop landlords to investment firms that own and manage huge numbers of rental properties. Advocates say that shift, which accelerated after the last recession, has already resulted in the loss of older, more affordable apartments as investors buy up properties to remodel and raise the rents. You cannot continue to increase the cost for mom-and-pop landlords without them giving up a selling. This will decrease the amount of lower price units for rent. This item is a perfect example of this. I have one tenant whom is not paying and another that is leaving the state. All older units in my area are being torn down and new condos are being built.

Communication from Public

Name: Housing is a Human Right

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 12:22 PM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: Please see attached letter as our public comment.



Housing is a Human Right
6500 Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90028

Los Angeles City Council
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

6/11/2020

RE: Empty Homes Penalty / Vacant and Habitable Housing Units. CF 19-0623

Honorable Councilmembers,

We at Housing is a Human Right applaud any and all attempts to address the profiteering of our housing at the expense of our communities. Too many units sit vacant because there is no encouragement to reduce rental rates to fill them. Our working-class families can't compete with corporate interests such as AirBnB who encourage property owners to leave units "vacant".

Per the CLA's report, we have 19,558 unoccupied residential units in the City of Los Angeles, at a time when we have an estimated unhoused population of 41,108. If each unit housed 2.5 people, we wouldn't have an unhoused crisis in this city anymore. We cannot continue to push for the building of new housing unless it directly addresses our growing unhoused population. We have to do more to address the crisis, and a vacancy tax would be one option.

We don't have the luxury of time regarding this issue as homelessness continues to rise year and year in the City of Los Angeles at a tremendous cost to taxpayers. This must be presented to the voters on the November 2020 ballot, and not for 2022 as proposed in the analysis. Pushing this to 2022 would only demonstrate that the City doesn't function in a way that addresses our key issues in the time frame necessary. We can't get so bogged down in bureaucracy that we can't make any progress moving forward. And there is no reason why we can't aim for both in order to pass this resolution to help our working-class families. But, considering the public is composed of majority renters, there is no reason why we can't address the most critical part of this issue and push for a vacancy tax on residential property now, and fill in subsequent issues later.

We applaud the Council in getting us this far. There is no real reason why we can't take this to the finish line and let the voters have their say this November.

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 12:09 PM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: I'm an LA county resident, and I'm writing on behalf of the Healthy LA Coalition. I strongly support putting the Vacancy Tax on the ballot for Angelenos to vote on. A Vacancy Tax will provide much needed revenue to the city at a time when revenue sources that the city is most dependent on will be considerably less than prior years because of COVID-19. The number of people living outside and in their cars has increased 14.2% in the past year, without the economic effects of COVID-19 taken into account. There are over 100,000 vacant housing units in the City of Los Angeles according to the most recent census bureau data. If they were released into the rental market, they could substantially help stem the tide of rent burdening and homelessness that afflict Angelenos. Implementing a Vacancy Tax policy could help stem the massive tide of evictions projected to occur after the COVID-19 related emergency renter protections are lifted. This must go on the ballot for the constituents to vote on. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: Angela Cuneo

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 12:10 PM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: I strongly oppose the vacancy tax. Please stop discriminating against landlords. You have made us the insurance policy for the City's Housing shortage. This is not our fault and you are making us bear the brunt. This causes further friction between landlords and tenants and we are just trying to make a living. There is a big difference between us and developers to whom you have given the keys to the city. Please help us also. Stop driving a wedge. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: Sarah Griffith

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 11:35 AM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: My name is Sarah Griffith and I've been a renter in Los Angeles for a little less than 5 years. I believe that a vacancy tax could be an effective way to combat our housing crisis. It is not right that people should be spending more than they can afford just to get a roof over their head. If units and properties are sitting vacant, it is because the piece of property is priced far too high, and/or requires too high of a credit score. Housing should buy a buyer's or renter's market, never a seller's. The HCID reports that there are anywhere from 85,000 - 100,000 vacant units in this city; that is unacceptable. Landlords and other property owners should be punished for hoarding units, and the people of Los Angeles deserve to vote on this matter come November. I urge you to advance this tax to our November ballot. Thank you for your time.

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 11:57 AM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: I strongly support having a vacancy tax on the November ballot. Los Angeles has an affordable housing crisis, and this tax will help build the services this city needs, while pushing developers to offer units because housing is a human right, not for profit.

Communication from Public

Name: Tommy Murakoshi

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 10:48 AM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: RE: The council file related to Agenda Item 33 – Council File 19-0623 To whom it may concern: I urge you to reject the above proposal as it would likely lead to landlords being forced to accept sub-standard tenants out of fear of having to pay the vacancy tax. I for one, have a leasing criteria based on gross income, FICO scores and prior evictions or bankruptcies that I have used for over thirty years during which I have never had to evict someone. I personally adhere to the belief that a vacant unit is better than an occupied unit with a troublesome tenant. Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely, Tommy Murakoshi

Communication from Public

Name: W Mark Hafeman

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 10:51 AM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: At a time when there are no unlawful detainer actions for non-payment of rent, LACC is considering a Vacancy Tax Ordinance. Landlords must continue to pay taxes, insurance, water, power and sewer. Other ordinances prevent Landlords from evicting tenants who move in additional tenants or animals. Thus, landlords pay increased water and sewer charges and cannot evict tenants. Then LACC passed laws preventing rent increases. Then LACC prevents evictions. To pay additional tax on an empty or unused property, simply because it is empty or unused makes no sense and is possibly an unconstitutional taking of private property. We already pay property tax, business license tax and now you want to pile on an additional tax during an economic and health pandemic. Don't kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. If LACC continues it will drive away investment in an already overly regulated and highly taxed environment. LACC opens itself to legal action that can be expensive. Don't be penny wise and pound foolish. We are not making money and we have to pay tax on not making money--crazy! W. Mark Hafeman

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 10:56 AM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: Rental housing providers and homeowners have been struggling financially due to the COVID-19 pandemic and are facing severe challenges in meeting their current financial obligations and property taxes. Proposals imposing additional taxes on already overburdened owners will only result in owners losing their properties. PLEASE STOP BURDENING PEOPLE WITH MORE AND MORE TAXES.

Communication from Public

Name: Jennifer Freudenberg

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 11:03 AM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: Taxing the people of California to "create more affordable housing," will NOT solve the homeless problem. Is your goal to get every middle class person to LEAVE California -- because that is what will happen if you continue to raise our taxes. (Maybe that IS what you want -- if we all left, there'd be plenty of housing available -- but eventually there will be no one left to PAY taxes and then who would pay your salaries?)

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 11:00 AM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: I strongly appose a vacancy tax, it is not the right way to go forward. Units are not kept empty because owners want to cause homelessness or not provide housing to someone, owners WANT to keep units full at all times. Each month a unit is empty is a big loss for the owner. When someone leaves a unit it takes some time to revamp it for the next individual or family. Then there is a process before it is rented, internal inspections, taking pictures, listing, answering calls, going through applications, etc... You are getting the point. NO Unit is left empty because the owner doesnt want to rent it. The system is working as is and units make their way to the market after following due process.

Communication from Public

Name: Scott K

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 10:03 AM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: As the owner of a business in the Greater Los Angeles area and as a business owner in other US states, I support a vacancy tax for the purposes of putting unused residential (and ideally commercial) properties to more productive use. Under-used properties lead to decay and neglect, whereas productive properties incentivise stable families and long term employment growth through maximal use of existing property capacity. There should be increasing time-based penalties for vacant properties that are not in the process of development or consistent use in order to deter absentee landlord behavior and ensure that the maximum amount of available property in the area best serve the needs of the citizenry. Allowing a semi-permanent vacancy rate (some of which acts as little more than tax sinks for landlords) containing sizable numbers of properties represents an obvious mis-allocation of resources as well as lost/unused capacity which could be marshalled to improve the well-being of L.A. as a whole. Encouraging, through tax penalties, landlords to make productive use of their properties will force them to confront the realities of the needs of the citizenry and develop properties in such a way as to serve those immediate needs rather than allowing them to wait out the needs of today's citizens.

Communication from Public

Name: Claire Meredith
Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 10:11 AM
Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: My name is Claire Meredith and I strongly support the Healthy LA Coalition in calling for putting the Vacancy Tax on the ballot for Angelenos to vote on. A Vacancy Tax can help provide NEEDED MONEY to the city at a time when revenue sources that the city has historically depended on is reduced because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of people living outside and in their cars has increased 14% in the past year, without the economic effects of COVID-19 taken into account. It is criminal that at a time when there are over 60,000 people unhoused there are over 100,000 vacant housing units in the City of Los Angeles. That's your city that you have been elected to lead! How do you answer to our unhoused brothers and sisters at this time? Implementing a Vacancy Tax policy is a small thing YOU can do to help worsen the eviction epidemic that is already taking place in this city and is only expected to get worse after the COVID-19 related emergency renter protections are lifted. This must go on the ballot for the constituents to vote on. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: Rabeya Sen

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 08:07 AM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: My name is Rabeya Sen and I am writing on behalf of Esperanza Community Housing Corporation. We strongly support the Healthy LA Coalition in calling for putting the Vacancy Tax on the ballot for Angelenos to vote on. A Vacancy Tax will provide much needed revenue to the city at a time when revenue sources that the city is most dependent on will be considerably less than prior years because of COVID-19. The number of people living outside and in their cars has increased 14.2% in the past year, without the economic effects of COVID-19 taken into account. There are over 100,000 vacant housing units in the City of Los Angeles according to the most recent census bureau data. If they were released into the rental market, they could substantially help stem the tide of rent burdening and houselessness that afflict Angelenos. Implementing a Vacancy Tax policy could help stem the massive tide of evictions projected to occur after the COVID-19 related emergency renter protections are lifted. This must go on the ballot for the constituents to vote on. Thank you, Rabeya

Communication from Public

Name: Russ Alan

Date Submitted: 06/15/2020 08:36 AM

Council File No: 19-0623

Comments for Public Posting: This is a gross over-reach City Council's authority. It will be challenged in court and deemed unconstitutional as an assault on individual property owners rights. Prop HHH allocated \$1,200,000,000.00 toward the homeless crisis and we have seen the number of people on the street increase by 14% in the last year. Bridge Housing was forced on the Venice community and it is now surrounded by squalor, drug use, crime and lawlessness. The Council should be held accountable and use the funds already appropriated in an intelligent way that houses as many people as possible, not on embarrassingly expensive projects like those proposed for Council District 11. I have been a Venice resident for over 25 years, the outright destruction of our community caused by the City Council and particularly Councilman Bonin's actions and inability to lead have turned Venice into a vile and shameful nightmare. There needs to be accountability and our community needs results, not an endless assault on our quality of life and personal property.