

Communication from Public

Name: Noah Suarez-Sikes
Date Submitted: 02/19/2026 04:57 PM
Council File No: 14-1635-S10
Comments for Public Posting: Please see attached comment letter concerning the need for stronger short-term rental regulation.

Los Angeles City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
City Hall, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

February 19th, 2026

RE: Protect Communities and Long-Term Housing in Los Angeles

Dear Honorable Council President Harris-Dawson and Members of the Los Angeles City Council,

We, the undersigned organizations representing tens of thousands of Angelenos across all fifteen council districts, write to you with urgency and purpose. For months, organizations and individuals alike have called on you to **reject Airbnb’s campaign to deregulate the short-term rental (STR) market in Los Angeles, and instead move forward with passing the thirteen enforcement amendments already approved by Council and currently pending with the City Attorney’s office.** These amendments are critical to protecting long-term housing and curbing rampant illegal STR activity—but the City Council has not yet acted. Every week that goes by without Council action results in more homes being lost to illegal STRs and more families displaced by corporate speculators. Los Angeles’s long-term residents cannot wait—we need you to act now.

With the Olympics approaching, the stakes of this issue could not be higher. The current enforcement of the Home-Sharing Ordinance (HSO) fails to protect residents and safeguard our neighborhoods. Non-compliance is rampant: according to City data, over 60% of STR listings in Los Angeles are illegal. The consequences are devastating: higher rents, increased displacement and rising homelessness. A 2022 study by McGill University professor David Wachsmuth shows that *STRs are responsible for an average annual rent increase of \$810/year for LA’s tenants, in addition to driving roughly 5,000 additional residents into homelessness.*¹

The Airbnb led “Save Our Services” (SOS) Coalition proposes to dramatically worsen this crisis. Their plan would authorize a nearly 350% increase in additional STR licenses, and undermine a core tenet of the HSO: that you can rent your own home, but that you cannot rent a house you don’t live in and take badly needed housing off the market. This would almost immediately accelerate speculation and displacement in some of our most vulnerable communities. Resurrecting the failed Vacation Rental Ordinance would be a catastrophic mistake.

SOS’s proposal is not a budget solution. It is a corporate deregulation campaign disguised as fiscal policy. Their plan does not generate new tourism or revenue—it merely shuffles the same amount of Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) across more STRs, making enforcement harder and taking away LA’s housing. The very unions most affected by the City’s budget woes, those that

¹ https://upgo.lab.mcgill.ca/publication/strs-in-los-angeles-2022/Wachsmuth_LA_2022.pdf

actually represent city workers, have called this campaign “opportunistic”, and the “latest attempt by Airbnb to further deregulate short-term rentals and exacerbate the ever-worsening affordable housing crisis in Los Angeles.”²

If Airbnb were truly concerned about the City’s budget shortfall, they would advocate for full enforcement of the existing HSO. According to estimates, enforcing the law and fining violators could generate up to \$300 million annually.³ The City should take immediate action to increase enforcement.

We urge the City Council to reject corporate pressure and to instead adopt all thirteen recommendations unanimously approved in March--with particular emphasis on two critical provisions:

- **Private Right of Action:** This amendment would empower residents harmed by illegal STR activity to pursue legal action against both hosts and platforms. Neighboring cities like Santa Monica and West Hollywood already offer this protection. Los Angeles residents deserve the same recourse.
- **Electronic Verification System:** This provision would require platforms to electronically verify a listing’s compliance with the HSO before a booking transaction is completed. It automates enforcement, shifting responsibility from the City to the platforms, and significantly reduces fraudulent listings.

The City must not be swayed by misleading claims or short-term political pressure. Legalizing tens of thousands of vacation rentals would permanently damage our housing stock, destabilize our neighborhoods, and undermine the City’s own commitments to equity and affordability.

We respectfully call on the City Council to agendize and implement these amendments without delay—and to reject SOS’s attempts to legalize the wholesale purchase and conversion of desperately-needed housing into tourist accommodations.

Should you have any questions, please contact Noah Suárez-Sikes at noah@betterneighborsla.org

Sincerely,

² <https://laist.com/brief/news/housing-homelessness/airbnb-pushes-more-short-term-rentals-los-angeles-unions-split>

³ https://upgo.lab.mcgill.ca/publication/strs-in-los-angeles-2022/Wachsmuth_LA_2022.pdf



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