

Communication from Public

Name: Noah Suarez-Sikes
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Council File No: 14-1635-S10
Comments for Public Posting: See attached letter RE: an illegal short-term rental at 429 Heliotrope Dr.



@better_LA
betterneighborsla.org

08/26/2024

Los Angeles, CA

Dear City Council President Krekorian and Members of Los Angeles City Council, City Attorney Feldstein Soto, and Ms. Lim,

We write to you today as neighbors, community members, or organizational representatives regarding the illegal and dangerous short-term rental located at 427, 427 1/2, 429, and 429 1/2 N. Heliotrope Drive.

In June, a group of six tourists suffered a robbery at their short-term rental located at 429 Heliotrope in East Hollywood, where they were zip-tied and robbed by unknown assailants.¹ The short-term rental at this property should never have been in operation: the Home-Sharing Ordinance restricts short-term rentals from operating in units subject to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance, requires hosts to be the primary resident of their short-term rental property, and mandates that hosts display a valid registration number on every online listing. The hosts operating the short-term rental at 429 Heliotrope blatantly disregarded each of these provisions within the HSO. Not only was the short-term rental operating out of rent-stabilized housing, but the registration numbers on the short-term rental units were for a different property, and were registered to a different set of people than the ostensible hosts.² Furthermore, the individuals operating this short-term rental had at least 22 other listings across the City, and thus categorically could not be considered the primary resident of the property.

Had the City adequately conducted proactive enforcement, this heinous crime may not have happened, because the illegal short-term rental it took place in would not have existed. The City's inability to proactively enforce its own laws put these visitors in a dangerous situation and removed an affordable housing option from the market for long-term residents. As a result of this lack of enforcement, six people were terrorized and the neighborhood was shaken.

The City has an obligation to protect its residents by enforcing the law as it stands. There is clear evidence supporting the issuance of a substantial fine in the tens of thousands of dollars to the hosts for a wide range of violations at this property alone. If the City lets these operators off with a slap on the wrist, rather than fully fining and shutting them down, it signals to every unscrupulous operator in Los Angeles that they can continue to flout the law without real consequences. The online platforms must also be held accountable. All platforms should be fined to the full extent of their violations, including every transaction for every listing operated by

¹ <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-06-04/six-minnesota-tourists-zip-tied-and-robbed-in-hollywood-home-invasion-reports>

² <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-06-13/tourists-robbed-in-east-hollywood-short-term-rental-that-violated-la-ordinance>

these hosts. A strong response to the violation that has occurred at this property and others managed by the hosts will act to deter similar law-breaking schemes and keep other illegal STR operators from snatching up housing meant for community members.

We call on the City to keep our community safe by shutting down this illegal STR, investigating other connected listings, and fully fining its operators and online platforms under the Home-Sharing Ordinance for having illegally exploited critical housing for a profit. **Only by enforcing our regulations and cracking down on the corporatization of our housing will we be able to keep our communities safe, and our neighbors housed.**

Signed,



Residents:

Donnelle F

Anahit M

Richard M

Garrett W

Nicholas W

Mar A

Edward M
Kate A
Alex W
April N
Rodolfo H
Christina M
Giselle R
Phillip H
Andre B
Elizabeth L
Andrea T
Darrell J
Sarah H
Lily H
Lourdes U
Shannon C
Stephany D

Jesse C
Rosa O
Jesse-James A
Gabrielle W
Tyler C
Omar M
Deblina A
Diana S
Karen M
Jonathan V
Juan D
Jose A
Xavier D
Diana M
Sofia E
Hasser E
Sandy F