



"Great Apartments Start Here!"

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Via Electronic Mail

Hon. Mayor Lindsey P. Horvath and Members of the City Council
West Hollywood City Hall
8300 Santa Monica Boulevard
West Hollywood, California 90069

Re: Additional Protections for Renters with Companion Animals (Agenda Item 2.N.)

Dear Hon. Mayor Horvath and Members of the West Hollywood City Council:

At the August 17th City Council meeting, the Council will be considering several measures related to affording protections to renters with companion animals, inclusion of clarifying the City's temporary eviction moratorium provisions and analyzing the development of an ordinance requiring all rental units in the City to be pet-friendly housing. As the Council deliberates these matters, the Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles' (AAGLA or Association) urges the City Council to consider the concerns and recommendations set forth in this letter.

- ***Require Pet-Friendly Housing in Rental Units***

We live in a diverse world filled with pet lovers and those who do not like pets or are allergic to pets. Establishing a citywide pet-friendly rental housing policy is problematic as it discourages renters who do not wish to, or for health reasons cannot, reside in a building where there are pets from moving to West Hollywood. Owners would not be able to provide a reasonable accommodation to those renters whose health would be affected by living in a pet friendly building, as no accommodation would be possible.

We appreciate the Staff report's recognition of the multitude of issues associated with a pet-friendly housing policy, such as "household pet minimums, pet rent, pet deposits, responsible pet ownership, and renter's insurance requirements". We urge the Council to thoughtfully review each of these matters to ensure that any policy that is advanced acknowledges both the potential for damage to rental units with pets, the nuisance issues that may arise and the need for pet liability insurance requirements in addition to renter's insurance. Moreover, while the Staff report highlights the reasons for establishing such a policy, it provides no insight on the potential impacts to other renters who may currently reside in buildings that do not permit pets and who have signed leases in those buildings specifically because of these restrictions. It is important to acknowledge and account for the interests of all West Hollywood renters.

- ***Update to Eviction Protections to Explicitly Include Companion Animals***

The City's current temporary eviction moratorium prohibits evictions except under limited



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circumstances. The Staff report indicates that the recommendation is "to include clarifying language in the urgency ordinance that renters with either permanent or temporary companion animals under their care are protected from eviction." The report does not define "companion" animal. Is it a pet or service animal? It is important to note that, in most of these cases, when the renter signed the lease agreement, they did so with knowledge of the building's pet policy and these animals were likely brought into the household recently. Where a mutually agreed-upon lease agreement included prohibitions against pets, the City's urgency ordinance should specify that following the expiration of the moratorium, the lease terms shall again govern and owner's right to enforce the lease shall no longer be impaired.

Thank you for your 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

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