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To: [WebMail - CCD](#)
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Subject: Public Safety Concern, Maintain STR Ban in High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, Public Comment, Item 9.A,
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Importance: High

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Dear Mayor and Members of the Whittier City Council,

My name is Nicholas Gutierrez and I am a Whittier resident living in **Starlite Estates in District 2**. I am writing to express my concern about the direction this ordinance is taking and to oppose **any changes that would weaken the ban on short term rentals in Fire Hazard Severity Zones**, including allowing hosted STRs in high fire areas.

The City has already removed the **Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone** from the ban, and now there is discussion about allowing hosted short term rentals in the remaining high fire areas. From a resident's perspective, this feels like the protections that were originally promised are being gradually reduced.

We are only about a year removed from the fires in Altadena and Pacific Palisades. Those communities are still rebuilding, which is a reminder of how **devastating and long lasting hillside fires can be. Prevention should be the priority**, especially when the risks are already well documented and understood.

I also work for Los Angeles County, and in my work I have seen firsthand how **heavily short term rentals must be regulated to address liability, safety, and neighborhood impacts**. Those regulations exist because STRs are not the same as a normal residence. They bring turnover, unfamiliar guests, and enforcement challenges that create **real and foreseeable risks**.

In hillside neighborhoods, that risk includes fire. I have personally witnessed short term rental guests setting off fireworks in residential areas, despite fireworks being illegal in Whittier. Visitors often do not understand the environment they are in, and **one mistake in dry brush conditions can have catastrophic consequences**.

Starlite Estates has only one way in and one way out. Emergency access and evacuation are already constrained. Adding short term rental traffic and turnover increases that risk.

I also want to emphasize an important point. When risks are known, documented, and discussed publicly, **decisions about land use and public safety carry a level of responsibility. Fire Hazard Severity Zones exist for a reason**. They are based on real fire behavior, terrain, and historical risk. If policies move in a direction that knowingly increases exposure in those areas, the consequences are not theoretical. They affect real people, real homes, and entire neighborhoods.

Short term rentals are also a **business operating in residential zones**. The changes being proposed primarily benefit operators, not the neighborhoods that absorb the impacts. As elected officials, I respectfully ask that you **prioritize the safety and long term well being of residents who live here every day**.

I respectfully urge you to **maintain the ban on short term rentals in the remaining Fire Hazard Severity Zones and not allow exceptions that weaken it. Once protections like these are removed, the consequences cannot be undone.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



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