



City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve

Memorandum
Councilmember Al Austin,
Eighth District

R-19

Date: September 3, 2013
To: Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember Al Austin, Eighth District *al*
Councilmember Gary DeLong, Third District *GD*
Councilmember Dee Andrews, Sixth District *DA*
Subject: Social Hosting Ordinance

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Request the City Prosecutor and the City Attorney to draft a Social Host Ordinance which holds adults responsible for knowingly permitting underage persons to consume alcohol in clear violation of State law. The ordinance should include a penalty serious enough to deter such conduct. The ordinance should also include a provision that when a police response is required to address parties where underage drinking is taking place, the adult(s) responsible for the parties should be required to reimburse the City for the reasonable cost to respond. Request the City Prosecutor and City Attorney to return to the City Council with 60 days with the draft ordinance.

BACKGROUND:

Social hosting is generally defined as providing and/or serving alcohol to a young person who is under the minimum legal drinking age. It can take place in a party-like atmosphere or by any adult simply providing alcohol to young people and their peers for them to drink.

A Social Hosting Ordinance holds individuals responsible for knowingly hosting a party, event or gathering where persons under 21 years old possess or consume alcohol regardless of whether they directly provided the alcohol, or for knowingly allowing the possession or consumption of alcohol by underage drinkers on property that he or she owns, leases or otherwise controls

According to a survey of youth of different ethnicities in Long Beach conducted by the Cambodian Association of America (CAA) in 2012, 71.9% of youth between the ages of 12-17 reported that they had drank alcohol at least once in the previous 30 days. 49.1% of youth 12-17 thought it was somewhat or very easy for underage drinkers to get alcohol.

When asked how do most young people get alcohol, 60% of the respondents indicated at parties and 33.8% said from adults at friends' homes.

Underage drinking is also a factor in drunk driving, as 100% of youth between 14-17 surveyed by the CAA reported that they had ridden in a car where the driver had been drinking. The American Medical Association reports that underage drinking is a factor in nearly half of all

teen automobile crashes, which is the leading cause of death among teenagers.

More than 37 cities in California have adopted social hosting laws, as well as five counties in the state. Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) has made social hosting laws part of its policy advocacy platform.

The idea of a social hosting ordinance was presented to City Prosecutor Doug Haubert, who agrees the City should look at adopting an ordinance that holds adults accountable when they host parties and allow underage persons to consume alcoholic beverages. There are already state laws in place in some instances, but additional City laws might further protect the public. Strengthening the law in Long Beach, provided such laws do not conflict with State law, can help to reduce underage drinking and the impacts on neighborhoods where underage drinking contributes to public nuisance activity.

The Social Hosting Ordinance will also provide our police with an additional tool to address this problem.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no known fiscal impact.