



City of Long Beach

Office of Robert Garcia
Councilmember First District 1

Date: April 17, 2012

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Robert Garcia, First District
Vice Mayor, Suja Lowenthal, Second District
Councilmember Gary DeLong, Third District

Subject: PET DOGS IN OUTDOOR DINING AREAS

Background:

In December 2011, the County of Los Angeles Environmental Health Department approved a policy to allow pet dogs to dine with their owners on restaurant patios where food is served by wait staff. This LA County Policy gave restaurant operators the discretion to allow dogs in outdoor dining areas. The County of Los Angeles Environmental Health Department assessed the risk factors involved in the allowance of pet dogs in outdoor dining areas and after an extensive review of supporting data they made changes to allow pet dogs on outdoor patios. LA County restaurants now have the option to allow pet dogs on their outdoor patios.

The City of Long Beach Health Department operates as an independent health jurisdiction and is not under the same policies and guidelines as the rest of LA County. Currently in our city, pet dogs are not allowed on restaurant patios where food is served.

The City of Long Beach should follow the lead of the County of LA and give restaurant owners the discretion to allow dogs in outdoor patios. Revising Long Beach's policy to give restaurant owners the flexibility to allow dogs in their outdoor patios is a great opportunity to become more dog friendly.

Those business owners who choose to keep their restaurant patios dog free would retain that right.

Allowing pet dogs on outdoor restaurant patios creates community and a dining experience for all members of the family, including the four-legged ones. Changing the existing policy will encourage healthy living, promote business and build community.

Recommendation: Request the City Manager to work with the Health Department to craft a policy that gives restaurant owners the flexibility to allow pet dogs on outdoor restaurant patios and return back to Council in 90 days with the proposed new policy.

Fiscal Impact: There will be some limited staff time dedicated to the policy revisions. No major fiscal impact.