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Andrew Pennington
Department of City Planning

via email andrew.pennington@lacity.org

January 28, 2021

Re: CF 11-1705 Citywide Sign Ordinance

Dear Mr. Pennington:

The Federation of Hillside and Canyon Associations, founded in 1952, represents 46 resident and homeowner associations spanning the Santa Monica Mountains and their more than 250,000 constituents. The Federation has sought meaningful restrictions on billboards in the City of Los Angeles since 2010. The Federation has reviewed the most recent version of the Ordinance that was released on December 10, 2020 and finds that it does not fulfill the stated goal of the Sign Ordinance to “incentivize sign and blight reduction.” Therefore the Federation strongly urges you to resubmit Version B Plus of the Sign Ordinance that was recommended by the City Planning Commission on October 22, 2015.

The newly proposed version expands the use of billboards throughout the city by proposing a Tier 3 category in Commercial zones and Manufacturing zones. This is contrary to the existing ban on billboards outside of Sign Districts. This would undermine that ban and expose the city to numerous expensive lawsuits.

The new proposal eviscerates the take-down requirement of existing static billboards in order to install new digital billboards. Allowing the sign industry to propose how they are going to mitigate the damage is a ludicrous proposal. It gives one the impression that this new version was drafted by the sign industry itself, not the Planning Department.

Version B Plus (2015) is a very good working compromise between, on the one hand, the need of businesses to advertise and, on the other, our responsibility to preserve the integrity of our remaining open spaces – such a key factor in what makes Los Angeles the unique and amazing city that it is – and the safety, tranquility and beauty of our residential neighborhoods.

The CPC recommended version of the Ordinance provides for:

- Restricting off-site signage to 15 sign districts in high-intensity regional commercial areas
- No “grandfathering” of sign districts not approved by April, 2009
- No amnesty for unpermitted billboards

Argyle Civic Assn.
Beachwood Canyon NA
Bel-Air Assn.
Bel-Air Hills Assn.
Bel Air Knolls Property Owners
Bel Air Skycrest Property Owners
Benedict Canyon Association
Brentwood Hills Homeowners
Brentwood Residents Coalition
Cahuenga Pass Property Owners
Canyon Back Alliance
Crests Neighborhood Assn.
Dixie Canyon Assn.
Doheny-Sunset Plaza NA
Franklin Ave./Hollywood Bl. West
Franklin Hills Residents Assn.
Highlands Owners Assn.
Hollywood Dell Civic Assn.
Hollywood Heights Assn.
Hollywoodland HOA
Holmby Hills Homeowners Assn.
Kagel Canyon Civic Assn.
Lake Hollywood HOA
Laurel Canyon Assn.
LFIA (Los Feliz)
Mt. Olympus Property Owners
Mt. Washington Homeowners All.
Nichols Canyon NA
N. Beverly Dr./Franklin Canyon
Oak Forest Canyon HOA
Oaks Homeowners Assn.
Outpost Estates HOA
Pacific Palisades Res. Assn.
Residents of Beverly Glen
Save Coldwater Canyon!
Save Our Canyon
Shadow Hills POA
Sherman Oaks HOA
Silver Lake Heritage Trust
Studio City Residents Assn.
Sunset Hills HOA
Tarzana POA
Torreyson Flynn Assn.
Upper Mandeville Canyon Assn.
Upper Nichols Canyon NA
Whitley Heights Civic Assn.

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- No off-site signage in City parks and recreational facilities
- Take-down ratios of 10:1 for digital signs and 5:1 for conventional signs
- Significant penalties for sign violators

It is vitally important that digital billboards be restricted to a limited number of Sign Districts. Numerous scientific studies have shown that digital billboards are a serious driver distraction and cause an increase in accidents. They would make it impossible for the Mayor to achieve his laudable goal of Vision Zero. Additionally billboards reduce property values; the closer the property is to a billboard, the greater the decline in property value. This is true for both residential and commercial properties. Since the city is dependent on income from property taxes, this new proposal would be financially unsound.

The 2015 Version B Plus of the Sign Ordinance is vastly superior to the 2020 proposed version. The Federation urges the Planning Department to resubmit the 2015 Version B Plus.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charley Mims". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the printed name below it.

Charley Mims