Greater Toluca Lake Neighborhood Council
Community Impact Statement

Passed at GTLNC Regular Board Meeting on Tuesday, March 18th, 2025

Re: Council File 25-0247 (Raman, Yaroslavsky): City Building Code / Multifamily Unit Residential Buildings / Six Stories / Single-Exit / Single-Stairway / Modification

The Greater Toluca Lake Neighborhood Council opposes Council File 25-0247.

Beware of bad ideas being passed off as "Reforms." This motion seeks to extract yet more entitlements for those already benefiting from subsidized Density Bonus housing, by dramatically reducing accepted, common sense national public safety protections for all residents of multi-family structures. The gratuitous proposed removal of double stairwell egress for emergency evacuation in such projects would delight real estate developers and investors as they look towards the eventual deregulation of rent-suppressed units and windfall revenue increases when the enlarged units are restored to full market value.

It's always troubling (and telling) when proposals such as this are not straight forward in their presentation of basic facts. For example: The proponents suggest that essential safety protections for all residents are somehow old-fashioned and obsolete, and that the California Legislature has already followed their lead and passed enabling legislation. However, the California statute cited is not what they imply – but merely a study authorization, for which no conclusions have been made, published, or further acted upon. So, the instant Motion is precipitous, and at best premature. In the meantime, the City's building codes are in compliance with both State and Federal law, and not in need of being tampered with.

The Motion ignores that forced height and density are confining and compressing our already fully built-out neighborhoods – indiscriminately lowering property values and livability for those who have sacrificed, often for decades, to achieve it. Apparently, the latter group of residents and voters are the 'people who don't matter', except to be subjected to more charming "motel-like" congregate housing.

Currently, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) requires two exit stairwells for buildings over four (4) stories in height, while the State of California requires two stairway routes in multi-unit residential buildings above three (3) stories in height.

In 2022, according to NFPA, a space heater in a New York City 19-story apartment building caused a fire that killed 17 people. The two exit stairwell requirement recognizes the importance of providing a secure means of egress in the event of a fire or other emergency. A second stairwell is vital.

In summary, it isn't broken and doesn't require fixing. Why indiscriminately sacrifice public safety? If you want more green space (which is ironically not legitimately implicated by this Motion), why not simply… STOP BUILDING!?

The Greater Toluca Lake Neighborhood Council

By: _____
Tess Taylor
President

To: City of Los Angeles Planning and Land Use Management Committee:
Councilmember Bob Blumenfeld, Chair, Council District 3
Councilmember Heather Hutt, Vice Chair, Council District 10
Councilmember Adrin Nazarian, Council District 2
Councilmember Nithya Raman, Council District 4
Councilmember John S. Lee, Council District 12

cc: Mayor Karen Bass
Joey Freeman, Deputy Mayor, Intergovernmental Affairs, Office of Mayor
Mark Edwards, Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs, Office of Mayor
Councilmember Katy Yaroslavsky, Council District 5