

## **Southern California Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Endorses LA Fire Safety Measure**

*City Council ordinance will tighten fire codes in multi-unit, residential construction*

**Los Angeles, CA** (June 10, 2019)—Today, the Southern California Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (SCHCC) announced its support for City Councilmember Bob Blumenfield and Councilmember Monica Rodriquez’s new proposal to make Los Angeles safe and resilient as we face continued threats from wildfires and other disasters. The Ordinance “Building a Safer Los Angeles” aims at curbing urban and suburban housing fires in LA county. The SCHCC of Commerce is a non-profit organization focused on promoting economic and community development for the regions important Hispanic business community.

“Over the last decade, Los Angeles has seen a rapid increase in minority business owners, as well as in the minority workforce,” says Teresa Barahona, Founder & CEO of the Southern California Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. “Councilmember Blumenfield’s proposal would help to ensure that our minority community can continue to contribute to the LA workforce and economy without the threat of poor and unsafe workplace construction.”

The Southern California Hispanic Chamber of Commerce is also a member of Build with Strength, a coalition of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association, which consists of community organizations, fire safety professionals, engineers, architects, and industry experts committed to strengthening the nation’s building codes and ensuring greater access to secure housing.

Councilmember Blumenfield’s proposed ordinance seeks to prioritize the mitigation and prevention of residential fires by restricting the use of flammable materials in new construction projects. The ordinance would also expand zones flagged as particularly susceptible to fires. Authored by Councilmember Blumenfield, the ordinance emphasizes the urgency to prioritize public safety in new construction, and suggests this urgency is “even more so when a natural disaster affects our city such as the recent wildfires.”

Los Angeles’s recent population uptick coupled with its recent fires has cast a shadow over the future of residential fire safety. It has also burdened LA taxpayers and according to one study, could develop into an economic disaster. The study authored by assistant adjunct professor Urvashi Kaul of Columbia University estimates Los Angeles’s losses as a direct result of fire damages to be \$22 billion by 2023.

“We can’t afford to wait any longer,” says Teresa Barahona. “Every minute we waste could be a future life lost, a future community center destroyed, a future livelihood ruined. The fires were a wakeup call. It’s time to stand up, and to raise our voices, and to do it now.”

###