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Glazer responds to Orinda's call for higher fines on short-term rental violations

By Sora O'Doherty



From left: Orinda City Clerk Sheri Smith, Police Chief Dave Cook, Council Member Inga Miller, state Sen. Steve Glazer, Vice Mayor Amy Worth and Mayor Darlene Gee. Photo provided

A bill to give cities the power to impose much bigger fines on short-term rental property owners who violate local ordinances was introduced by state Sen. Steve Glazer at the request of the city of Orinda. Glazer introduced Senate Bill 1049 on Feb. 18 in response to last year's tragic Halloween party shooting at an Airbnb rental in Orinda that claimed five lives. The bill was co-authored by Assemblywoman Rebecca Bauer-Kahan. Glazer said short-term rental platforms such as Airbnb have thus far not raised objections to the legislation. The senator held a press conference on Feb. 17 at the Orinda library plaza to announce the introduction of the proposed legislation.

Glazer said that short-term rentals are not meant to be "party central;" the new legislation is intended to create "a strong disincentive" for people to rent out houses that attract large crowds in residential neighborhoods and in violation of local ordinances. Orinda officials said that they are reaching out to other cities and to the League of California Cities seeking support for the legislation.

Currently, Orinda and California's other general-law cities are permitted to impose fines of up to \$1,000 for violating local short-term rental ordinances. But under the legislation introduced by Glazer, the maximum would increase to \$5,000. The state's charter cities have more flexibility in setting fine amounts than do general-law cities like Orinda, and the city council has authorized a subcommittee to explore the possibility of changing from a general-law to a charter city.

Last November, the Orinda City Council passed an emergency ordinance banning "non-hosted" rentals altogether, and placing new limits on "hosted" venues, including requiring stays of two nights or longer, designed specifically to fend off one-night party rental scenarios. The city continues to work on developing a permanent ordinance.

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