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***CITY COUNCIL APPROVES NEW VENICE BEACH ORDINANCE  
Rosendahl Wins Protection of "Free Speech Protection" Package***

LOS ANGELES – The City Council today approved a package of proposals protecting Venice Beach’s fabled street performers while defending free speech and curbing commercial activity along the west side of Ocean Front Walk.

By a vote of 12-0, the council endorsed a series of initiatives recommended by 11<sup>th</sup> District Councilman Bill Rosendahl. The proposals, which follow a series of Town Hall meetings moderated by the councilman, are designed to protect the character and artistic flavor of Venice’s top tourist attraction.

“This is a great day for Venice Beach,” Rosendahl said. “Today’s vote will end the illegal commercial vending that has threatened the street performers and free expressionists, harmed local merchants, and made life unbearable for local residents.”

The Rosendahl proposals, born from three public meetings that each drew hundreds of residents and boardwalk denizens, do the following along the publicly owned west side of Ocean Front Walk:

- Declare an officially recognized “Free Speech and Expression Zone” from Navy Street to 17<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Allow performers, entertainers, and free expressionists to sell their own original and constitutionally protected merchandise.
- Prohibits all other commercial activity.
- Cracks down on excessive noise.

The Rosendahl proposals also direct the Department of Recreation & Parks to work with the Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council and other Venice Beach

stakeholders as part of a “Venice Beach Free Expression Protection Working Group” to do the following:

- Explore whether and how to abolish the controversial “lottery” based system of issuing permits for space on Ocean Front Walk.
- Develop a proposal to further restrict excessive noise through guidelines for restrictions on amplified noise.
- Examine community ideas to further refine and improve the Venice Beach ordinance.

“I am pleased that we have developed an open-ended, flexible, community-based approach,” Rosendahl said. “Venice Beach has a life unto itself, so we need to keep looking at and revising the rules. This creates a living process to do that.”

The Rosendahl initiative fills a much-needed gap at Venice Beach. Last summer, at the urging of the office of the City Attorney, the City Council repealed parts of the ordinance regulating vending on the west side of Venice’s fabled Ocean Front Walk. That action came just weeks after vendors unhappy with regulations brought a First Amendment suit against the city. The City Attorney’s office advised the Council that parts of the ordinance were “constitutionally infirm” and needed to be repealed immediately.

Since the City Council repealed the previous ordinance last summer, performers have been squeezed out by commercial interests, and legal, tax-paying merchants on the east side of the boardwalk have suffered from unfair competition.

# # #

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