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April 27, 2017
For Immediate Release

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DEPARTMENT OF FAIR EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING ANNOUNCES AGREEMENT WITH AIRBNB TO COMBAT RACE DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSING

The Department of Fair Employment and Housing and Airbnb agree on steps to prevent and combat racial discrimination on housing platform

The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing today announced an agreement with San Francisco-based Airbnb, Inc. to support ongoing efforts to reduce bias and combat discrimination on Airbnb's platform. The agreement follows a Director's complaint filed by the Department in June of 2016 that led to more than ten months of investigation and collaborative work between DFEH and the company.

Under the agreement, DFEH will conduct fair housing testing of certain California Airbnb hosts. Fair housing testing involves the use of trained individuals and/or the creation of customer profiles with specific characteristics to pose as prospective renters in order to gather information about whether a host is complying with fair housing laws.

"We will continue to work collaboratively with Airbnb to prevent racial discrimination by its hosts," said DFEH Director Kevin Kish. "California is committed to removing all discriminatory barriers in housing, including in new platforms and marketplaces. Fair housing testing is an important and powerful tool in enforcing fair housing laws."

As part of the agreement, Airbnb will take measures in addition to those the company has been implementing since September 2016 in consultation with other civil rights experts. Airbnb will advise all users with complaints of racial discrimination of their right to file a complaint with DFEH, and will regularly report to the Department on guest acceptances by race in California.

Airbnb, Inc. has more than 76,000 hosts in California.

The Department of Fair Employment and Housing is the state agency charged with protecting the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and from hate violence and human trafficking. The largest state civil rights agency in the country, the Department receives, investigates, mediates and/or prosecutes more than 20,000 complaints of discrimination yearly.