



Regulating BBQ

May 20, 2026

Los Angeles councilwoman Nithya Raman [wants](#) city officials to impose new regulations on backyard grilling when conditions are dry and windy. The mayoral candidate proposed restricting “backyard barbecues, fire pits and other open flames” in residential neighborhoods when such conditions exist.

Cities often prohibit burning leaves on windy days, in part because burning leaves may spread too easily when it’s blustery. But barbecues are more contained.

National Review’s Noah Rothman [suggests](#) that the caution would be more plausible if California had ever suffered a “rash of fires — or even just one — attributable to the careless mishandling of charcoal briquettes.”

Accidental causes of conflagrations tend to be things like lightning strikes and faulty power lines. These work in conjunction with poorly managed forests.

Arson, a big danger in recent years, comes in a variety of forms, as Mr. Rothman explains. “The record-breaking 2024 Park Fire was set by an intoxicated motorist who pushed his car into some flammable brush after an accident.”

The Palisades Fire was “first set by an embittered anti-capitalist vigilante” who hated the rich.

Arson and drunk driving are already illegal.

Anybody can try to cook hamburgers by setting a fire in the middle of high vegetation and calling this a “barbecue.” But that’s not the kind of thing Raman had in mind.

Fortunately, another councilwoman, Monica Rodriguez, managed to block Raman’s effort to toss a wet blanket on barbecues.

“The last thing Angelenos need,” Rodriguez says, “is a ban on hosting a carne asada in their own backyard.”

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.