



"Great Apartments Start Here!"

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Via Electronic Mail

Hon. Mayor Meghan Sahli-Wells, and
Members of the Culver City Council
Culver City Hall
9770 Culver Boulevard
Culver City, California 90232

Re: Discussion of Findings of Soft Story Seismic Retro-fit Building Survey (Agenda Item A-2)

Dear Hon. Mayor Sahli-Wells and Members of the Culver City Council:

The Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles (AAGLA) commends Culver City for hiring an engineering firm to conduct a citywide survey of commercial and residential structures. This survey will help to ensure the safety of Culver City's residents and to identify buildings that are potentially vulnerable to the impacts of a major earthquake as the City contemplates developing a Soft-Story Seismic Retrofitting Program. It is indisputable and critically important to ensure that buildings are structurally sound to withstand the impact of a major earthquake so that the City can mitigate loss of life and injury resulting from a natural disaster.

As the City Council reviews the Degenkolb survey and recommendations, the related Staff report, and deliberates establishing a seismic retrofitting program, we urge the Council to be cognizant of the enormous upfront costs associated with seismic retrofitting projects that owners must endure. As indicated in the Degenkolb survey, the probable costs "to retrofit most multifamily / commercial will range from \$40,000 to \$160,000, with most averaging \$80,000." Additionally, as highlighted in the Staff Report, of the buildings identified by the survey as vulnerable, "378 of the buildings (62%) contain six or fewer dwelling units" of which most are owned by smaller, "mom and pop" owners.

We appreciate the Staff Report's acknowledgment that small owners, owning the 62% of the identified vulnerable buildings, would be financially impacted by a seismic retrofitting program and even more so for owners subject to the City's recent rent "cap." We also support Staff's recommendation to consider allowing property owners to pass-through a portion of the costs to renters as permitted under a similar ordinance adopted by the City of Los Angeles. Further, as recommended in the Degenkolb survey, we support the establishment of advisory group meetings in



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which key stakeholders are provided the opportunity to discuss any proposed policy and implementation issues.

A seismic retrofitting program addresses a vital societal need by ensuring the safety of Culver City's residents. A seismic retrofitting program necessitates a thoughtful and streamlined approach in the program's development that accounts for a wide range of factors involved. The program should provide for sufficient compliance timeframes and extensions. As several surrounding jurisdictions have already established or are in the process of establishing similar programs, it is essential that adequate time be provided to owners in order to complete the necessary work. Due to increasing demand for seismic retrofitting work resulting from the passage of similar ordinances, it is becoming increasingly more difficult for owners to find a reputable company with availability and as a result, contractors practicing in this area are experiencing backlogs and prices are increasing both due to demand and due to tariffs on steel and other required materials.

Furthermore, as stated earlier, seismic retrofitting projects are a significant cost burden which, in light of the recent passage of Culver City's tenant protection ordinance, an owner's ability to recover the significant costs of retrofitting will be impossible absent sharing such costs equally among owners and renters. The financial burden must not be placed solely on owners, particularly small rental housing providers who have limited financial resources. We also urge the Council to provide financial resources such as low-cost financing to alleviate this overwhelming financial burden of seismic retrofitting projects.

Lastly, as seismic retrofitting work often involves the loss of resident parking for extended time periods, we urge the City Council to contemplate a plan to facilitate temporary on-street parking in close proximity to displaced renter's homes in under-parked neighborhoods.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these important issues as you discuss the advancement of a seismic retrofit program. If you have any questions, please call me at (213) 384-4131; Ext. 309 or contact me via electronic mail at danielle@aagla.org.

Very truly yours,

Danielle Leidner-Peretz