**[Rent Freeze or Rent Control Form Letter]**

***This is a template that may be used to write a letter to any elected officials or editors of local papers regarding RENT FREEZE. We encourage you to revise the letter in your own words.***

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Name and/or Title*

*Company*

*Address*

*City, State Zip Code*

Re: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Agenda Item \_\_\_\_\_)

Dear\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

***(Insert “Editor” or “Hon. Mayor ‘Last Name’ and Members of the ‘Name of City’ City Council” or other name)***
 My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I am a responsible housing provider in the City of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I am writing this letter to express my strong opposition to the Council’s consideration of imposing **[‘a rent freeze’ or ‘rent regulations’].** Adopting a **[‘a rent freeze’ or ‘rent regulations’]** will hurt the smaller, “mom and pop” rental property owners like me **[us]**, who provide the City’s most affordable housing. **[I have lived in the City of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_\_ years, and I wish to continue providing housing for individuals and families in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ community.]**

 **[Explain how long you have owned rental property and/or became a rental property owner, and how you have been a responsible housing provider.]**

**Exhibit A.** I have been a rental property owner for \_\_\_\_\_\_ years. I have [had] worked 9:00 to 5:00 jobs my whole life, and after much sacrifice, I [we] finally saved up enough money to buy a \_\_\_\_\_\_ unit apartment building in the City of \_\_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I have not raised my rent for \_\_\_\_\_ years, and I am one of the many that provide housing under market value in the area. I am [we are] not in the eviction business and my [our] goal is not to evict my tenants, but rather to provide housing for those in our community who need it.

 There have been numerous studies expounding upon the ineffectiveness of rent control policies. An artificial constraint on rent growth leads to decreased investment in existing structures and an exhaustion of housing supplies. It discourages builders from making new investments and tells current housing providers to reduce investments in existing housing**.** Moreover, rent control measures only seek to benefit a small number of individuals who are encouraged to remain in their lower-cost apartments even when their financial earnings have significantly increased or encourages individuals not to accept better job opportunities when faced with moving and giving up their rent controlled unit.

In Cambridge and Brookline, Massachusetts, the total number of rental housing units fell by 8 percent and 12 percent respectively in the 1980s following the imposition of a strict rent control measure. Even within our own State of California, rental units decreased by 14 percent in Berkeley and 8 percent in Santa Monica between 1978 and 1990. This is the perverse effect of rent control. It does not provide a single affordable unit in the city but rather forces small owners out of the industry due to the loss of financial flexibility. Moreover, it is estimated that the City of Los Angeles today loses 5.5 rental units per day due to its strict regulatory environment.

**[Please state your opposition to the measure and explain why/how detrimental this measure would be on small rental property owners like yourself. See examples on the attached, Exhibit A.]**

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please call me at (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or email me at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_@\_\_\_\_\_.\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely,

*Your Name*

**Exhibit A – Additional Commentary on Rent Control Policies**

1. I want to emphasize that adopting a rent control measure is not the answer to addressing the housing shortage problem within the city. It will not alleviate the financial burdens of the renters nor provide affordable housing for those who need it. Therefore, I oppose the Council’s proposed adoption of rent control ***[and related rent regulations]***, and I urge the Council to consider actual effective measures to resolve the problems facing the city.
2. However, adopting a **[‘a rent freeze’ or ‘rent regulations’ or ‘rent control’]** measure will unfairly penalize rental property owners like me who have been providing the bulk of affordable housing in the City. Implementing this measure will force me to raise the rent to the permissible limit every year, to ensure that I can cover expected and unanticipated operating expenses. If passed, I will no longer have the flexibility in managing my investment property and to raise rent only when necessary to respond to emergencies. Additionally, if this continues, many small rental housing providers will be pushed out of the industry due to the hardship of maintaining these properties, thus further depleting the already limited supply of affordable housing. Therefore, I strongly oppose the Council’s proposed adoption of rent control or any related rent regulations.
3. The major problem with rent regulations like those being proposed is that they strip property owners like me of basic rights ordinarily considered sacred to property ownership – the ability to freely regulate, and so long as there is no discrimination, the right to freely enter into a lease contract at arms-length negotiated terms, including for how much and for how long. Taking such basic inalienable rights away from property owners means that our ability to manage our buildings will be severely diminished, and the risks that we have taken on as investors will dramatically increase. Under the proposed ordinance, the control of rental properties in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will clearly shift from the hands of owners to City Council and the City’s renters. Under normal housing policy, we as owners should have earned the respect and appreciation of renters by providing something very meaningful like the very roof over our tenant’s heads, which we have only achieved through hard work, saving, investing, risking capital, and then tending to our investments by paying our mortgages, taxes, insurance, repair bills and other expenses. I urge you to re-think that path you, as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, are about to embark upon. There are far better solutions than greatly increasing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s annual budget to administer a program that will only cause more housing shortages and protect very few needy renters.
4. If \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ truly wishes to address affordability, it should promote housing development and not draconian 1970’s regulations such as a rent freeze and expansive lists of rent regulations. A rent freeze will not alleviate the financial circumstances of the City’s rent burdened renters, nor does expansive rent regulation bring about affordable housing. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_merely needs to look to cities such as Santa Monica and West Hollywood, cities that have instituted rent control and housing regulations for decades. These cities have experienced higher rents than \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and are plagued by homelessness far greater than \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Instead of advancing age-old “housing solutions” that have provided very little temporary relief and will result in long-term negative consequences, I [we] urge the City Council to think innovatively and not follow the “same-old” concepts advanced by neighboring cities in Los Angeles.