



"Great Apartments Start Here!"

Danielle Leidner-Peretz
Director, Government Affairs &
External Relations
danielle@aagla.org

213.384.4131; Ext. 309

March 17, 2020
Via Electronic Mail

Hon. Mayor Tornek and Members of
the Pasadena City Council
Pasadena City Hall
100 North Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, California 91101

Re: Moratorium on Evictions for Non-Payment of Rent By Tenants Impacted By the COVID-19
Pandemic and Considerations to Reduce the Impacts to Residents and Local Businesses
(Agenda items 4 and 5)

Dear Hon. Mayor Tornek and Members of the Pasadena City Council:

We are experiencing a global pandemic that has necessitated government action at all levels to curtail further advancement of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and minimize the financial loss affecting a multitude of industries and the individuals whose livelihoods are depend on those industries. The Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles (AAGLA) urges the City Council to take a holistic approach in recognition of the detrimental impacts of COVID-19 on the City's residents and businesses, all of whom need support during this most challenging time.

At today's special City Council meeting, the Council will be considering an ordinance placing a moratorium on evictions for non-payment of rent by residential and commercial renters impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The proposed ordinance would also prohibit "no-fault" evictions of residential renters unless it is necessary for health and safety purposes (Agenda Item 5). The Council will also be considering additional staff recommendations to assist residents and businesses affected by COVID-19 (Agenda Item 4).

As the Council contemplates the adoption of the eviction moratorium ordinance, we urge the Council to provide specific parameters relative to the moratorium to facilitate renters and rental housing providers understanding of their rights and responsibilities. We urge the Council to require that renters provide rental housing providers with written notice of their inability to pay the rent as soon as the circumstances set forth in the ordinance arises, so that rental housing providers can make financial adjustments, if and where possible, to account for the loss in rental revenue. Of equal importance, renters should be required to provide specific, verifiable supporting employment or medical documentation reflecting that their loss of income is directly related to COVID-19. Further,

rental housing providers should be permitted to request and accept partial rental payments from renters without modification of lease agreements or limitation on their ability to later seek payment of unpaid rent . As the pandemic and related government interventions are continuously evolving, we urge the City Council to set an emergency moratorium period of 30 days with the option to extend the moratorium as necessary.

The Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles (AAGLA) represents thousands small rental housing providers, many of whom own properties in the City of Pasadena and provide housing to city residents. Many of our members are retirees who rely on the modest rental income they receive to support themselves and maintain the building for their renters. During these extremely difficult times, rental housing providers are instituting more frequent and stringent building cleaning protocols in promotion of the health and safety of both residents and others entering their building which adds to their maintenance costs and makes it more challenging to pay for their other financial obligations associated with rental property ownership including mortgage payments, property taxes, liability insurance, and contracts with service providers and vendors.

Deferred payment of rent has sweeping financial implications on not just the multifamily rental housing industry but also the small businesses that they support. It is important to emphasize that eviction moratoriums will not replace a renter's lost wages or cover the cost of food, medical prescriptions and related essentials.

The Association appreciates the Council's consideration of additional measures to alleviate the financial stress associated with COVID-19 through the suspension of all late fees and penalties on municipal services, suspension of all utility shut-off for all customers due to non-payment and suspension of parking related requirements. Nevertheless, the most direct and impactful way to assist residents and businesses alike is through the establishment of emergency financial assistance. It is critical that the City Council establish an emergency assistance fund to provide essential financial support to all impacted residents and businesses struggling during these uncertain and turbulent times. We also urge the Council to direct financial institutions and lenders to extend grace periods, offer deferred payment plans and provide interim relief to rental housing providers who have reduced rental income resulting from local emergencies.

During this pandemic, it is essential that we all work together to develop effective and balanced solutions that serve to assist all those impacted and not simply shift the financial burden from one group to another. Thank you for your time and consideration of these matters. 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