



"Great Apartments Start Here!"

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Via Electronic Mail

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Re: Updating the County's Eviction Moratorium to Extend, Clarify, and Gradually Phase Out Tenant Protections (Agenda Item 9)

Dear Hon. Board of Supervisors:

At the June 22nd meeting, the Board of Supervisors will consider extending the County's Eviction Moratorium, set to expire on June 30, 2021, to September 30, 2021 with amendments. The Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles (AAGLA or Association) is opposed to any extension of the moratorium and urges the Board of Supervisors to allow it to expire.

The County's eviction moratorium was established in March 2020, as an interim emergency measure necessitated by a global pandemic and government mandated stay at home orders that resulted in the business shutdowns and escalating unemployment.

For the last 17 months no other industry has been subjected to greater government restrictions than the multifamily rental housing industry. Many of our members are small business rental housing providers who have endured dire financial challenges, and for over a year have been collecting little, if any, rental income, and consequently depleting retirement and other savings or financing critical items with credit cards in order to maintain essential building operations, with many now contemplating or being forced into leaving the business entirely. Our members have often worked with their renters who have been financially impacted by COVID-19, but have also witnessed circumstances where renters, who have not been impacted by the pandemic, have taken advantage of the situation, and simply not paid rent due.

Today, California is open and back to business. Residents are going out and beginning to enjoy all the activities that were long-awaited over the past year. Businesses are engaging in regular operations, with individuals working, returning to work, or having new employment opportunities. The rental housing industry must also be allowed to resume operations and the collection of much needed currently due rent.

Moreover, the State Legislature has enacted laws providing renters with significant eviction protections and a COVID-19 Rent Relief Program to assist renters and rental housing providers. Additional federal funding through the American Rescue Plan will afford expanded rental assistance. Renters who have been impacted by the pandemic and have been unable to pay rent will have over a year to pay back deferred rent, cannot be evicted during that time for the deferred rent owed and if they comply with State requirements

cannot be evicted for back due rent ever.

At this time, what justification exists to warrant the Board of Supervisor's consideration of extending the County's broad-based local residential moratorium? The circumstances that precipitated the establishment of the eviction moratorium simply no longer exist.

The Board of Supervisor's meeting agenda indicates that the motion under consideration is to update the County's moratorium with the objective of extending, clarifying and gradually phasing out the moratorium. Yet, the moratorium provisions remain predominantly unchanged, call for the reinstatement of the prohibitions on tenancy terminations based on non-payment of rent, extend all the current eviction prohibitions with the exception of a limited allowance for owners and/or their close family members to move-in to their single-family home.

The most distressing proposed change is that the non-payment of rent provisions being proposed would attempt to, as of July 1st, eliminate the State's requirement that renters pay 25% of the deferred rent in order to receive eviction and pay-back protections. While we believe that the County is preempted by the State from taking such action, many owners having received limited, if any rental income, have been reliant on that modest rent collection. To take away this limited right granted by the State after owners have not collected rent, in many cases, for well over a year and will not be able to try and collect that money for another 13 months is inconceivable.

It is concerning that at this juncture, the Board of Supervisors has not allowed the moratorium to expire or set clear timelines and dates for the phasing out of the moratorium. The Board has also not considered reasonable steps such as limiting applicability of the moratorium to only renters that continue to be financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and provide supporting documentation. Such documentation should be available and is required for renters to receive State and County rental assistance. Moreover, what is the basis for extending eviction prohibitions on nuisance and unauthorized pets? Why should a problematic renter who is engaging in disruptive behavior impacting the peace and quiet enjoyment of other renters in the building continue to be afforded coverage under the moratorium and leaving rental housing providers with no means of resolution to address the concerns of the other renters in the building?

It is vital that the Board of Supervisors recognize that the eviction moratorium was an interim measure and cannot and should not be a replacement for long-term solutions. It is time to seek a path forward that serves to assist everyone facing financial hardships during the pandemic and limits future economic instability after the emergency has concluded, not merely continually advancing interim remedies to which we already are witnessing considerable negative ramifications as small business rental housing providers are be forced to sell their properties and with that the loss of some of the County's most affordable and much needed housing.

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

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