



March 26, 2020

Mayor Bill Wells and Council Members
City of El Cajon
200 Civic Center Way
El Cajon, CA 92020

RE: Temporary Moratorium on Evictions

Dear Mayor Wells and Council Members:

On behalf of the Southern California Rental Housing Association (SCRHA) and its nearly 3,000 members who represent over 128,000 rental units in Southern California, we are writing to commend the city for its response to the Coronavirus/Covid-19 emergency and offer solutions for rental housing.

As more cities are adopting or considering ordinances to place a moratorium on evictions during the COVID-19 emergency, we are writing to ask for specific considerations should the city pursue an ordinance.

We understand that protections against evictions is crucial as employment situations are creating a scenario where many people are unable to work, and therefore, unable to meet rental payment obligations. Our organization supports balanced measures that are designed to keep Californians healthy and housed.

Should you consider an eviction moratorium, we want to remind you that roughly 2/3rds of rental property owners in the San Diego region are small independent owners who rely on their rental income to meet their financial obligations, and in some cases have no other source of income.

Recommendations:

- Mirror the ordinances adopted by the County and City of San Diego. Our members own and manage property throughout the San Diego region, therefore, implementing an ordinance that is the same or similar, rather than a patchwork of regulation during an already confusing time, would serve to benefit residents and landlords alike.
- We are in support of a system in which the tenant notifies the landlord, preferably in writing, on or before the day rent is due. Communication early and often will assist both parties in navigating this situation.



Southern California Rental Housing Association

- Create a clearly defined process for notifying a landlord of financial hardship. Upon notifying a landlord of a hardship, the tenant should provide documentation substantiating the hardship within one week.
- The following should be required to prove substantial loss of income:
 - letter from an employer citing COVID-19 as a reason for reduced work hours or termination
 - paycheck stubs from before and after the COVID-19 outbreak
 - bank statements showing financial situation before and after the outbreak
- Include language that affirms a rental property owner and/or manager's ability to enter into a payment agreement with residents. Some individuals and families may have the ability to pay some rent during the emergency, which could help offset large balloon amounts coming due when the moratorium is lifted.
- Any payback period should be consistent with the length of the emergency. We would suggest the following language: *"Tenants who were afforded eviction protection under this Ordinance shall have a time period equivalent to the length of the moratorium to pay their landlords all unpaid rent. If a tenant opts to move while the ordinance is effective, all owed rent is due upon move-out. At the end of the defined payback period, a landlord may evict a tenant who has not paid all outstanding rent and resort to all remedies available to the landlord under the lease and the law."*

We strongly urge the city to request that local, state and federal elected leaders adopt economic aid packages to ensure landlords have minimal impacts to their operations such as:

- Rental assistance to tenants in the form of grants
- Suspension of the collection of property taxes
- Forbearance on water and sewer payments as well as any other city payments that may be deferred
- Low-Interest loans

Again, thank you for your leadership during this crisis. We look forward to working with your offices to ensure residents are safe and housed during this emergency, while not placing property owners in financial hardship.

Sincerely,

Kendra Bork
President

Alan Pentico, CAE
Executive Director