



From: Dianne Black <meesterblack2006@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 9, 2023 11:44 AM
To: sbcob; Williams, Das; Laura Capps; Hartmann, Joan; Nelson, Bob; Van Mullem, Rachel
Cc: Pamela Flynt Tambo; Anthony & Revae; vicki allen
Subject: Item A-28 on the Board's Agenda for 7/11/23
Attachments: 7_11 Just Cause Amendments (Final,Final).pdf

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Board of Supervisors,

Please see the attached letter from the League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara regarding the Just Case for Residential Evictions. The LWVSB supports this item and is not requesting it be pulled from the agenda.

Respectfully,

Dianne Black
LWVSB Leadership Team and Board Member



July 8, 2023

Dear Chair Williams and Board of Supervisors,

On behalf of the League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara (LWVSB), I would like to thank the Board of Supervisors for approving the first reading of the ordinance to strengthen Article IV of the ordinance titled, Just Cause for Residential Evictions (County Code Chapter 44).

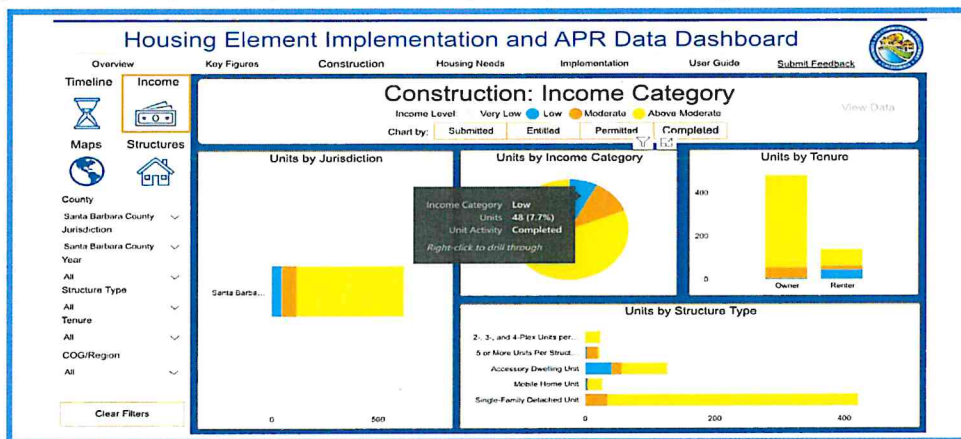
Time is of the essence - please approve Item A-28 as drafted. Because residents' housing stability hangs in the balance, we ask that you act swiftly to approve this item and not pull it from the agenda for further discussion. Specifically, the LWVSB supports the proposed amendments to the existing ordinance that: 1) requires landlords to offer tenants a one-year lease, 2) allows tenants the right of first refusal to return to their apartments, and 3) clarifies what constitutes a "substantial remodel," namely one that is meant to improve compliance with health and safety laws.

As outlined below, we believe that protecting tenants from unjust evictions and preserving existing affordable housing should be a top priority of the County given the severity of the affordable housing crisis. Our reasons for this position are as follows:

- Not passing this ordinance increases the risk of losing lower-income units to more outside corporations. To protect tenants, the County needs to send a clear and decisive message to any potentially unscrupulous corporation which wants to evict residents purely for profit motives and not because there is a real health or safety risk to them. This is all the more important because the County is losing ground in maintaining its naturally-occurring affordable housing stock which is being converted into expensive, market rate housing by outside corporations. This situation is not unique to here. According to a March 2023 report by the credible, nonpartisan California Housing Partnership (CHP), the state's unregulated, low income housing has "increasingly been the target for acquisition and conversion by for profit entities seeking to maximize rent (p.1)." Currently, the County of Santa Barbara has over 2,000 units of unregulated, naturally affordable low-income (less than 80% AMI) housing in multi-unit buildings that are at immediate risk of conversion to high-priced, market rate rentals (see Appendix B of the CHP report).
- Replacing lost low-income units is slow-going given the lack of affordable housing funding and rate of new construction. To put this situation in perspective, only 48 units of

low-income housing were built in the County's unincorporated areas between 2018-22 (see Figure 1 below). The majority of housing being built is market rate and unaffordable to most of our workforce. Given inadequate public funding for and how long it takes to build low-income housing, the County should be employing every strategy available to prohibit corporate conversions and protect the rights of our low income workforce, elderly and residents who are also most at risk of becoming homeless.

Figure 1: County of SB (Unincorporated) Completed Housing Units from 2018-2022



Source: [CA Housing and Community Development, 2023](#)

Continue to investigate ways to strengthen tenant protection laws and any unintended consequences raised. In addition to approving these amendments, we encourage the Board of Supervisors to consider future options for improving tenant protection laws, including an amendment that limits how much a landlord can increase the rent when a tenant wants to return after a remodel. Tracking related state legislation is important too. County staff and the Board of Supervisors should also monitor for unintended consequences, as well as assess whether new safeguards for tenants are truly effective.

By continuing to fine tune just cause eviction laws, the County has an opportunity to protect residents and stop displacement and homelessness. Effective tenant protection laws also help to preserve our affordable housing infrastructure that is critical to maintaining a diverse, environmentally-sustainable and economically-thriving County.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Respectfully yours,

Vicki Allen

Vicki Allen
VP of Communications on behalf of the Leadership Team