

Los Angeles Coalition for Responsible Housing Solutions

April 17, 2018

Ms. Sachi Hamai
Chief Executive Officer
County of Los Angeles
500 West Temple Street, Room 713
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Ms. Hamai,

On behalf of the members of the Los Angeles Coalition for Responsible Housing Solutions, we are writing to express our position on items agendaed for the coming Tenant Protections Working Group meeting on April 18, 2018, specifically as it relates to Just Cause evictions. We believe there are many valuable tools available to the County that will improve tenant protections at better rate than implementing Just Cause eviction.

As a matter of practice, we believe the housing crisis is a shared challenge with shared solutions, which will be solved by working with the County, tenants and property owners. We strongly believe that the only way to ensure affordability within the region is to build more housing—specifically by streamlining the County’s zoning and planning process. As an organization that represents a vast number of property owners and as a partner in the housing debate, we believe that offering fixed-term leases will provide greater stability and reduce displacement better than Just Cause.

Just Cause eviction ordinances are based on a faulty premise that housing providers want to evict tenants. Just Cause eviction ordinances also have negative consequences for both tenants and owners.

- Evictions are extremely costly for housing providers; both unit turnover costs as well as court and legal fees are very high.
- Just Cause eviction forces property owners to either act on a cause immediately or waive their right to act on the cause in the future. This forces owners to issue eviction notices immediately as opposed to working with a tenant to improve a situation or to give them more time to pay rent.
- Just Cause evictions require that tenants receive a 3-day notice to move instead of 30 or 60 days. It is almost impossible to find alternative housing and move in 3 days.
- A 3-day notice will make it more likely that the tenant will have an unlawful detainer judgement against them, which will make it more difficult for the tenant to find housing in the future, as it is a negative mark on their rental history.
- For cases that involve nuisance or criminal activity, witness cooperation is crucial for a successful eviction. Unfortunately, the witness’s name is required to be on the 3-day eviction notice and many tenants will not agree to be a witness for fear of retaliation. For legitimate reasons of safety, many witnesses will not come forward. If an owner cannot prove a case without witnesses, then the rest of the tenant community will suffer the consequences of the illegal or nuisance behavior, since the owner cannot simply issue a 30- or 60-day notice.
- California already has some of the most aggressive tenant protections in the country, including eviction protections. Though a 30/60-day notice of termination may be served for any reason or

no reason at all, it may not be served for a discriminatory (Civil Code section 51) or retaliatory (Civil Code 1942.5) reasons. Tenants can always bring an action for retaliation or discrimination, even without Just Cause.

Necessary Alternatives:

We support an approach that will protect tenants, like requiring property owners to offer **fixed-term leases** to tenants. Fixed-term lease agreements will help provide stability, prevent displacement and reduce the burden on our legal system. We believe fixed-term leases will also prevent “bad” property owners from unreasonably increasing rents on tenants who raise habitability, discrimination or other claims.

Furthermore, the County must implement a robust, effective and multi-lingual education program to help bring tenants and property owners into the conversation. There is a real and necessary need to provide both sides with an explicit understanding of existing tenant rights and protections. The County should work with the Los Angeles Coalition for Responsible Housing to help develop an education program directed to tenants and property owners, which we believe will actually help protect tenants and further the Board’s policy goals.

We appreciate your consideration,

The Los Angeles Coalition for Responsible Housing Solutions, including:

- Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles*
- Apartment Association, California Southern Cities*
- Arcadia Association of REALTORS®*
- Beverly Hills Greater Los Angeles Association of REALTORS®*
- Building Owners and Managers Association International*
- Burbank Association of REALTORS®*
- California Apartment Association*
- Greater Antelope Valley Association of REALTORS®*
- Greater Downey Association of REALTORS®*
- Los Angeles County Business Federation*
- Long Beach Chamber of Commerce*
- NAIOP – Commercial Real Estate Development Association*
- Pacific West Association of REALTORS®*
- Pasadena Foothill Association of REALTORS®*
- Rancho Southeast Association of REALTORS®*
- South Bay Association of REALTORS®*
- Southland Regional Association of REALTORS®*
- Tri Counties Association of REALTORS®*
- United Chambers of Commerce San Fernando Valley Region*
- Valley Industry and Commerce Association*
- West San Gabriel Valley Association of REALTORS®*