



East Bay Housing Organizations

Dear Mayor Lyman and City Councilmembers:

On behalf of East Bay Housing Organizations, and also as a long-time resident of El Cerrito, I strongly urge you to pass the proposed moratorium on evictions. It is impossible for people to shelter in place when they have no place to shelter.

We ask that you also enact the following changes:

- 1. Extend the repayment period from 6 months to 12 months.** We do not know how long it will take after the state of emergency is lifted before everyone is able to get back to work and regain their incomes. And for lower income tenants who were already paying 40%, 50% or more of their income for rent, it may not be possible to make full repayment in just 6 months. Providing for an extended period, with provisions for some kind of payment plan, will ensure that we aren't simply deferring a wave of evictions and increase in homelessness.
- 2. Clarify and simplify the requirements for documentation.** We want to ensure that this requirement doesn't pose a barrier for tenants, especially under conditions of a shelter-in-place order where documentation may be harder to obtain.
- 3. Extend coverage to more situations.** While the immediate focus has been on the financial and medical related impacts of COVID-19, there are other circumstances that should be included during this emergency to support the public health of all concerned. We urge you to consider simple and comprehensive criteria such as a moratorium on all evictions, except in cases in which the tenant is jeopardizing the health and safety of others. In particular, no fault evictions for such causes as owner move-ins or Ellis Act withdrawals of rental properties from the market, should be suspended. **Evictions and potential homelessness are not just a problem for the tenants themselves - in the current situation this would also exacerbate the threats to public health and safety.** This could easily be accomplished by an emergency ban on no-fault evictions covering all rental properties.

In addition, the **City will need to take aggressive action to make sure that all tenants and landlords are fully informed of these provisions and requirements.** This needs to go beyond simply posting information on the City's website and in community newsletters and include direct contact with residents to then extent possible..

I will also note that we are actively advocating at the State and Federal level for rent and mortgage relief for tenants, homeowners, and rental property owners to make sure that our housing system is not disrupted during this critical and extraordinary period.

Thanks you for your response to this unprecedented crisis and your efforts to ensure that all El Cerrito residents remain safe and healthy.

Jeff Levin, Policy Director
East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO)