



January 15, 2021

Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors,

On behalf of the Raise the Roof Coalition, our 12 member organizations, and the many residents with whom we work and serve, I want to thank you for your leadership to protect tenants by passing a moratorium on many residential evictions and rent increases in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a source of unprecedented strain for all of us, from our residents to our institutions. The many losses that we suffered in 2020--of loved ones, jobs, routines, and a sense of "normal"--have been devastating. **But they would've been so much worse had community members and elected officials not come together to stop as many harmful and needless evictions as possible.**

With the arrival of effective vaccines and a new national administration, 2021 has the potential to be a year of renewal and hope. **But our work is not yet done.** Infection rates in California, among the worst in the nation, are more rampant and deadly than they've been at any other point in the pandemic. The surge in cases has pushed hospital capacity to dangerously low levels. Over 500 Californians are now dying from COVID-19 each day. And the out-of-control nature of the public health crisis is impeding a safe economic recovery. Nationwide, over one million people filed new unemployment claims in the first week of 2021 alone.

This is the worst possible time to end eviction moratoria. Mass evictions would increase community spread, adding further peril to our public health and economic crises. But AB 3088 and Contra Costa County's moratorium are both set to expire on January 31st, just days from now. In the past, the Board of Supervisors has expressed a preference that the State take responsibility for enacting emergency tenant protections. **If that remains the case, then we urge you to take the following five actions to protect local tenants, while also providing relief for economically vulnerable landlords and non-profit affordable housing providers:**

1. **Issue a resolution in support of [AB 15 \(Chiu\)](#) and [AB 16 \(Chiu\)](#).** These bills would extend AB 3088 protections and provide financial relief to struggling tenants, landlords, and non-profit housing providers. There may be pressure to compromise elements of AB 15 in ways that would weaken not only the law's tenant protections, but also its ability to

slow the transmission of COVID-19. So we encourage you to state your support for the bill *as written*. In particular, it's vital that the measure: a) extend the eviction moratorium until the end of 2021, or at least until certain economic milestones, such as a drop in unemployment, are met; and b) doesn't attempt to preempt local governments from enacting measures that are more protective.

2. **Communicate your support directly to Contra Costa's legislative delegation and the Governor.** As local elected officials, your voices carry significant weight with our State representatives. This action aligns with the priorities in [Contra Costa's 2020 State Legislative Platform](#) (p. 16).¹
3. **Affirm the importance of financial relief for tenants and landlords impacted by COVID-19 in all resolutions and communications.** We believe that no low-income renter should be burdened with years of debt because they were unable to pay their rent during the pandemic through no fault of their own. Specifically, we need a program that: a) forgives rental debt that was created due to the pandemic; b) isn't conditioned on the approval of the landlord; and c) provides financial relief to small landlords and non-profit affordable housing providers. The 2008-09 financial crisis made it all too clear that debt is one of the main drivers of racial inequality in our communities. We need to act now to support struggling tenants and property owners, and thus begin to right the wrongs of our history and disrupt current systems of racial injustice.
4. **Extend Contra Costa County's moratorium on rent increases and no-fault evictions until the end of the protections offered by AB 15.** This action would ensure a continuation of the same essential scope of protections that local renters have come to rely upon for the duration of the pandemic. Given that AB 3088 and AB 15 are limited to non-payment evictions, the current mix of State and County measures is needed to protect Contra Costa renters from avoidable, no-fault evictions.
5. **Prepare to renew Contra Costa County's moratorium on residential evictions, if needed.** We are hopeful that, with the support of the Board of Supervisors, and other elected officials, the State will act to extend the eviction moratorium past January 31st. However, it's essential that the County be prepared to step in and immediately provide local eviction protections should the State fail to act.

We hope and believe that our county will turn the corner on COVID-19 in 2021 with the arrival of vaccines, rental assistance, economic stimulus, and the general recovery that these supports will allow. **However, we need more time for these remedies to come to fruition before we can allow emergency tenant protections to expire. If we don't continue these protections**

¹ "SUPPORT increasing and maintaining affordable housing stock and housing stability by way of supporting funding, policy, or regulations that promote housing for the most vulnerable low, very low, and extremely low-income households, including the production and preservation of various housing types and the protection of stable housing for vulnerable persons experiencing homelessness."

now, then we'll undermine our collective efforts to combat not only this virus, but also the enduring public health crises of racial and economic inequity.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Werth', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alex Werth
Policy Associate
East Bay Housing Organizations

Sent on behalf of the Raise the Roof Coalition:

Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE)
California Nurses Association
Centro Legal de la Raza
Contra Costa Central Labor Council
Central County Regional Group, First 5 Contra Costa
East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (EBASE)
East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO)
Ensuring Opportunity Campaign to End Poverty in Contra Costa
Faith Alliance for a Moral Economy (FAME)
Jewish Family and Community Services East Bay
Monument Impact
Tenants Together