



"Great Apartments Start Here!"

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Via Electronic Mail

Honorable Mayor Tim Sandoval
and Members of the Pomona City Council
505 South Garey Avenue
Pomona, California 91766

Re: Rent Stabilization, Just Cause & Relocation Fees – Agenda Item 12

Honorable Mayor Sandoval and Members of the Pomona City Council:

The Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles (AAGLA) represents nearly 10,000 rental housing providers, including many in Pomona. More than 80% of our members are mom-and-pop owners with 20 or fewer units.

We appreciate that the rental registry is no longer part of the draft permanent ordinance. However, the ordinance still contains fatal defects regarding the proposed relocation fee amounts. These same amounts were inappropriately included in the urgency ordinance as a quick fix that remains completely unsupported by a cost study or current rental rates in Pomona.

Many of the existing city council members were not on the council at the time of the April 17, 2023, meeting when these relocation fees were included as placeholders until a cost study could be conducted. Unfortunately, these rates were extremely inappropriate even at that time and remain so. Staff testified at the meeting that the relocation fee amounts were merely copied directly from Los Angeles City's relocation fees. Staff acknowledged that these amounts are wildly inflated as the average rates in Los Angeles County were 33% higher than the average rents in Pomona at the time. Accordingly, these proposed relocation fees are completely baseless and inappropriate for Pomona and have only caused financial harm to already struggling rental housing providers since the time of passage of the urgency ordinance. **Before any new permanent ordinance is adopted, these relocation fees must be properly revised downward to reflect appropriate rental rates in the City and to be properly utilized by rental housing providers.**

Since these artificially inflated rates were adopted the difference between rents in Pomona and Los Angeles County has remained stable. However, as these relocation fees are taken from the City of Los Angeles (and not the County), the difference is even greater. **According to CoStar data the average rent in the City of Los Angeles is 37% higher than in Pomona. Therefore, the relocation rates for Pomona should be reduced by at least a minimum of 37%.**

Just as rental rates are significantly lower in Pomona, it is likely that moving costs are also significantly lower. As such, the relocation rates are already artificially inflated even if a 37% reduction is made. This is why it is critical for Pomona to conduct its own cost study, if it intends to have relocation fees that are higher than what state law already provides.

When relocation fees are excessive for an area, it prevents rental housing providers from conducting needed major system repairs. Substantial remodels are already restricted by state law to major system repairs or removal of hazardous materials that take longer than 30 days to complete and cannot be done safely while the renter remains in place. Purely cosmetic repairs never qualify for removal of a renter. These substantial repairs are already extremely costly to conduct and adding unreasonable relocation fees on top of these costs makes the work unaffordable for mom-and-pop rental housing providers.

Until such time as a robust cost study is undertaken by Pomona, relocation fees should revert to what is already provided under state law.

We also continue to urge the City Council to use the \$253,000 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for direct rental assistance for renters impacted by recent immigration enforcement activities. The County of Los Angeles has already created an Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERRP) that will be available to renters countywide in December. Pomona should immediately create its own rental assistance program to provide additional assistance as Culver City has already done for its renters.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to reach out to me directly by telephone at (213) 384-4131; Ext. 309 or via electronic mail at janet@aagla.org.

Sincerely,

Janet M. Gagnon

Janet M. Gagnon, Esq.

CC: Daniel Yukelson, Executive Director, Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles