

April 29, 2016

Santa Rosa City Council
City Hall
100 Santa Rosa Avenue, Room 10
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Re: Rent Stabilization and Just Cause Eviction

Dear Santa Rosa City Councilmembers:

As members and allies of the 6 Wins for Social Equity Network, a regional coalition of over 20 organizations working to promote social, racial, economic and environmental justice in the Bay Area, **we write to support the Rent Stabilization and Just Cause Eviction policy proposed by the North Bay Organizing Project (NBOP), SEIU 1021, and their community partners. We urge you to adopt a policy that reflects this platform.** This includes allowing rent increases of no more than 100% percent of the consumer price index per year; a rent board that is funded by a small fee per unit; just cause eviction for all units, including those built after February 1, 1995; relocation payments for evictions in the amount of two months' rent plus the difference in the cost of new housing; strong code enforcement; and notification to tenants of their rights when moving in to a new unit.

Through our work at the local level in cities and counties around the Bay Area and at the regional level through our Plan Bay Area campaign, we know that rising housing costs and the lack of tenant protections are displacing low-income tenants throughout the region. Santa Rosa is not alone in facing the problem – and it would not be alone in finding meaningful solutions.

At the local level, various cities in San Mateo, Santa Clara, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties (in addition to Sonoma County) are currently considering ballot measures and legislation to add or strengthen rent stabilization and just cause protections. As the most populous city in the North Bay and the fifth largest in the Bay Area, Santa Rosa should help lead the way for the rest of the Bay Area, and adopt a comprehensive policy that effectively protects tenants from displacement.

At the regional level, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission is considering a staff proposal to tie One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) transportation funds to local jurisdictions' adoption of strong anti-displacement policies, such as rent stabilization and just cause eviction. The 6 Wins and many other stakeholders support using OBAG funds in this way. Santa Rosa has an opportunity to get ahead of the curve and position itself to effectively compete for these important transportation resources.

The need for rent stabilization and just cause eviction is clear. Residents of hundreds of neighborhoods throughout the Bay Area are experiencing advanced gentrification or exclusion, currently undergoing displacement, or at risk of gentrification or displacement, including large

portions of Santa Rosa in particular, according to a study that UC Berkeley released recently.¹ In Santa Rosa, where nearly 47 percent of households are renting and therefore more vulnerable to rising housing costs, more than 79 percent of renters earning less than \$50,000 are rent-burdened (paying more than 30 percent of their income towards rent). Moreover, rising housing costs and the challenge of displacement disproportionately affect communities of color, raising fair housing and racial equity concerns. For example, more than two-thirds of African American and Latino households are renters,² and African American and Latino households are much more likely to be severely housing cost burdened (paying more than 50 percent of income towards rent) than white households.³

Rent stabilization and just cause eviction are among the strongest tools available to help long-term residents stay in their homes and communities. Enacting the policy proposed by NBOP and its partners would help ensure that Santa Rosa remains diverse and inclusive, sets the bar for the rest of the region, and meets Plan Bay Area goals and targets and its own fair housing obligations. We hope you will not delay in enacting a strong rent stabilization and just cause eviction policy.

Thank you,

Miya Yoshitani
Asian Pacific Environmental Network

Dawn Phillips
Causa Justa :: Just Cause

Daniel Saver
Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto

Jennifer Martinez
Faith in Action Bay Area

Kathryn Gilje
Genesis/Gamaliel California

Kyra Kazantzis
Law Foundation of Silicon Valley

David Zisser
Public Advocates

Poncho Guevara
Sacred Heart Community Service

Rev. Kirsten Snow Spalding
San Mateo County Union Community Alliance

Rev. Earl W. Koteen
Sunflower Alliance

Leah Simon-Weisberg
Tenants Together

Tony Roshan Samara
Urban Habitat

Derecka Mehrens
Working Partnerships USA

¹ University of California, Berkeley, Urban Displacement, available at www.urbandisplacement.org.

² U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, available at www.factfinder.census.gov.

³ In Santa Rosa, 32 percent of African American households and 27 percent of Latino households are severely cost burdened, compared to 19 percent of white households. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, AFFH Data and Mapping Tool (based on CHAS Data), available at <http://egis.hud.gov/affht/#>.

To: Mayor John Sawyer; Vice Mayor Tom Schwedhelm; and Councilmembers Chris Coursey, Erin Carlstrom, Julie Combs, Ernesto Olivares, and Gary Wysocky (citycouncil@srcity.org)