

Communication from Public

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Council File No: 23-0623

Comments for Public Posting: Hello, Please see attached letter from the UNIDAD coalition.



6/20/23

Re: **23-0623**

Subject: Implementing strong right of return and tenant protections while Codifying Executive Directive 1

Dear Councilmembers,

The United Neighbors in Defence Against Displacement Coalition (UNIDAD) writes this letter regarding item Council File 23-0623. The motion aims to codify the process to streamline affordable housing project applications in the City of Los Angeles in order to provide much needed housing faster. While we are supportive of the need to produce affordable housing, we encourage the City Council and planning staff to use this opportunity to codify a law that will also address some gaps that we have identified in terms of demolition of existing housing. It is imperative that, in order to advance equity and racial justice in any such policy, the following strategies must be included:

- Tenant protections to prevent displacement and gentrification in communities most at risk, especially and ironically in light of the fact that this streamlines demolition of current low-income housing in order to expedite a goal of production;
- Preservation of the existing stock of healthy affordable housing;
- Production of healthy affordable housing, at the deepest affordability levels, to stabilize the communities most at risk of displacement and gentrification. Doing so will help address the crisis of housing affordability and rent burden created by the gap between median rents and median income that exist in this city.

We have various examples in which families in South Los Angeles will be displaced out of their rent stabilized apartments in order to accommodate a 100% affordable housing project. While the city recently entered into a contract with a relocation firm, the data should be made public and available of how many affected tenants are filing right to return paperwork. Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE) operates a weekly Tenant Action Clinic in which on various occasions we have received requests for information and resources from tenants whose building will be demolished in order to build a new affordable housing. The existing tenants feel confused and lost as to why they will be displaced. It is important for this opportunity on permitting approval to also take into consideration the impacted tenants. The policy needs to include transparency and accountability for developers to offer the right of return to tenants. The entities



approving the units, should also verify that the information is accurate. We have encountered units where housing is set to be demolished for an affordable housing project, and the developer on file indicated the building was vacant, however we saw toys left outside the unit, indicating that children previously lived in the unit.

We are extremely concerned by the lack of tenant protections in a directive that purports to want to build more affordable housing for the very same low-income tenants and residents who are being displaced. The above examples are a small sample of what we are hearing from residents, including concerns around the way in which the consultant firm is approaching tenants and why tenants are not trusting of the relocation process. This very practice and process seems in direct contradiction to the spirit of the motion. It also raises concerns about the potential, without clear tenant protection guidelines and specificity on ensuring housing at the deepest affordability levels, for the new production to lead to increased gentrification and destabilization of the very same communities and residents for whom this motion is intended.

Hence, we urge you to please consider these issues before rushing to approve a motion that carries severe unintended consequences for this city's most vulnerable residents in terms of their housing and neighborhood stability. Please take these issues into consideration as you are developing the new law for codifying Executive Directive 1.

Thank you for your time,

UNIDAD Coalition

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