

MOTION

As the Coronavirus pandemic extends from days to weeks, and perhaps even into months, the aftershocks in the economy and in people's personal lives are starting to be felt. The stalled economy has severely impacted income, and, locally, thousands of City residents have lost their job or are experiencing severely reduced income. This reduced income forces residents to make difficult choices regarding what bills to pay.

These choices are a no-win situation, and oftentimes are based on ensuring that basics, such as food and rent are secured. Therefore, many more ancillary bills are going unpaid, such as monthly payments for the storage of belongings. Inside Self-Storage (ISS), a self-storage organization for facility owners, operators, managers, investors, and developers is aware of this impossible choice, and has warned its members of this impending dilemma. ISS advises that the government's disaster-relief checks are not likely to be used by consumers for self-storage rent. More significant priorities like food, transportation, and utilities are likely to take precedence.

Given these impossible choices, Los Angeles residents have already begun to neglect paying their storage payment, which has put their belongings in jeopardy of being confiscated. The California Business and Professions Code, Chapter 10, details some basic rules and regulations regarding the rights of the consumer and the storage unit owner, including the procedure to enforce a lien on stored property. Failure to pay after just 14 days can trigger the process for the lien and eventual confiscation of stored property. Additional provisions are commonly included in leases, but expert advice informs that month-to-month leases rarely offer protections from unforeseeable circumstances such as a global health pandemic.

Given that residents, due to circumstances beyond their control, are at risk of losing their stored property by defaulting on their monthly storage payment, protections, similar to the Coronavirus eviction moratorium, need to be enacted.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council request the City Attorney to prepare and present an ordinance prohibiting the sale, disposal, donation, or confiscation of personal belongings in rented storage units, if an individual's storage lease goes into default resulting from the effects of the Coronavirus emergency.

PRESENTED BY: 

DAVID RYU
Councilmember, 4th District

SECONDED BY: 

jr


APR 22 2020

ORIGINAL