



**CITY OF SAN DIEGO
COUNCIL PRESIDENT GEORGETTE GÓMEZ**

May 6, 2020

Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Request for Rental Relief for Affordable Housing Residents

Dear Governor Newsom,

I continue to applaud your efforts to address the economic and social impacts associated with COVID-19, which has included ensuring that our low-income and undocumented residents have resources and protections afforded to them.

As the response to this public health emergency continues, many residents have felt the direct negative economic impacts that have caused great harm to their livelihoods and families. As elected officials, we must protect these residents from potential eviction. We have put into place eviction moratoriums but we must be proactive and look forward and do more. As you know, one potential outcome that we must avoid is the impending rental payback crisis that will occur when all rent that may be in arrears is due in the early Fall based off of the projected expiration of local, county, and state eviction moratoriums currently in place.

The reality is that many low-income residents, including mixed immigration status households that are excluded from Federal relief programs, will not have the financial wherewithal to repay the rent that is owed due to the lack of income. Halting future evictions in the State of California by providing a significant infusion of funding for rental relief will be incredibly important to our residents to stabilize and protect the public investment in existing affordable housing communities.

As such, I support the creation of a State rental assistance grant program for residents and operators of rental housing that could offer housing providers and landlords with assistance to cover COVID-19 related rent shortfalls and protect tenants by cancelling past due rent due to COVID-19. This could include providing direct grants to housing

providers and landlords to waive all rent arrears for tenants dating back to the beginning of the State of Emergency order. This funding source could also provide a State source of rental subsidy that mixed-status households can qualify for which is critical to many California households.

I believe that there are many benefits of such a program by keeping affordable housing communities and landlords solvent, and in doing so we are keeping tenants housed who otherwise might be at risk of eviction due to reduced income. Providing an incentive to maintain a positive relationship between renters and housing operators and landlords and preventing the accumulation of a rental debt “overhang” by tenants at the end of the declared emergency will be critical to our recovery.

I look forward to working with your office to uplift our low income and mixed immigration status residents by creating a rental relief grant program. As the Council President for the City of San Diego, I am eager to work on this important next step.

If you have any questions, please contact Lara Gates, Deputy Chief of Staff, at lgates@sandiego.gov or 619-236-6699.

Sincerely,



Georgette Gómez
Council President, City of San Diego

CC:

Senate President pro Tempore Toni G. Atkins
Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
Honorable Ben Hueso, Senate District 40
Honorable Brian Maienschein, Assembly District 77
Honorable Todd Gloria, Assembly District 78
Honorable Shirley Weber, Assembly District 79
Honorable Lorena Gonzalez, Chair, CA Latino Legislative Caucus, and Assembly District 80