



## CITY ADMINISTRATION

### MEMORANDUM

March 10, 2023

TO: City Council

FROM: Dan Schwarz, City Manager

SUBJECT: Additional Rent Regulation and Eviction Protection Information

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Staff received some questions and comments that fell outside of the discussion and analysis in the March 15, 2023 staff report. I am providing the information in this memo to make it available to the Council and the public should it be of value during the discourse at the meeting.

**Effectiveness of Offering a Tenant/Landlord Counseling:** At the Council's workshop on eviction protections, Councilmember Carroll reported about a conversation he had with a staff person for ECHO (Eden Council for Hope and Opportunity) about the services provided by the organization in the City of Concord. Staff reached out to ECHO for more information.

ECHO provides a number of tenant/landlord relations services to agencies in three counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, and Monterey. Most agencies contract with ECHO to provide counseling to tenants and landlords about each their rights and the rental housing regulations applicable within that City. ECHO finds that information often resolves the concern or dispute.

Five agencies (the County of Alameda and the Cities of Albany, Concord, Emeryville, and Union City) contract with ECHO for mediation services. San Leandro contracts with ECHO for support through its process but the mediation is conducted by a rent review board. Fremont reports recently engaging ECHO to assist with its rental dispute resolution program, which culminates in an arbitration hearing before a board if mediation fails.

Staff asked ECHO if it has any data to show the efficacy of providing a counseling service. ECHO reported that in Fiscal Year 2021-22, it logged 421 counseling cases across the five jurisdictions. Of those cases, 47 advanced to mediation (11%).

While interviewing the City of Oxnard, staff learned that the agency would be adding two employees under the housing specialist in charge of Oxnard's rent stabilization program because the City had underestimated the demand and need for counseling services.

Rent Regulation by Ballot Initiative: Staff has received several inquiries about whether a rent regulation ordinance can be placed on the ballot. This option is available to the City Council. The Council could have staff draft an ordinance and ask voters whether it should be adopted. The Registrar's Office reports that the next available ballot for such a measure could be considered is November 7, 2023. If the Council were to choose this option, the election would have an estimated cost of \$55,000 - \$65,000. (The election costs would be lower if other local measures emerged.)

Possible Amendments to AB1482: Staff has been tracking statewide discussions about whether the Tenant Protection Act might be amended. Staff notes that earlier today, SB 567 (Duarzo) was introduced. Senator Duarzo has stated that AB1482 is not sufficient. The language of the bill is not yet available to review, but Senator Duarzo's comments indicate that she advocates lowering the allowable annual rent increase and tying it to a consumer price index. She also advocates a lower maximum rent increase.

SB 567 is a "spot bill." A spot bill is often introduced to force a conversation with the goal of producing final legislation. Staff will continue to monitor on the discussions in Sacramento and report back to the Council.