



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
of the Los Altos-Mountain View Area**

September 24, 2016

Mayor Pat Showalter and Members of the City Council  
City of Mountain View  
500 Castro Street  
Mountain View 94041

Re: Council Meeting, September 27th, Agenda Item 7.1 – Introduction of an Ordinance Amending Tenant Relocation Assistance

Dear Mayor Showalter and Members of the City Council:

The LWV supports affordable housing for all Californians. We also support policies to provide a decent home and suitable living environment for every American family. The LWV also believes that tenant and landlords should have their rights protected.

Based on these positions, we have the following recommendations regarding the proposed amendments to the Tenant Relocation Assistance Ordinance (TRAO). Generally, we are in support of the recommendations of the Environmental Planning Commission regarding amendments to the TRAO. First, we agree with the EPC that the TRAO should continue to apply to all rental units, including those occupied after February 1, 1995.

Eligibility should be for those at all incomes, as even those with higher incomes have a very difficult time finding housing when they are displaced. Even more important, if the benefits are means-tested, this could lead to landlords discriminating against those with lower incomes at the outset in order to avoid paying relocation benefits.

As the staff report indicates, and the EPC agreed, the difficulty of enforcing this ordinance is great. This revised TRAO would provide tenant relocation assistance in cases where the City has no involvement (as there is no requirement for the landlord/developer to obtain an approval or permit from the City, as is the case with the present TRAO). Thus, we are most concerned with the staff's discussion of possible enforcement mechanisms. Per the staff report, enforcement appears to be costly and cumbersome, with no specific enforcement/remedy option appearing to be very feasible.

Perhaps a major effort in tenant education would help, including an attachment in bold-faced large print on the top of every lease or rental agreement, describing the TRAO to new tenants. Many of us have observed in talking with tenants that many tenants are unaware of the new ordinance requiring a one-year or six-months lease and have not been offered such a lease; this is an example of the difficulty of putting the burden of enforcement on the tenants.

Thank you for considering our input.

Donna Yobs  
Co-Chair, Housing Committee  
LWV of the Los Altos/Mountain View Area

cc: Jannie Quinn  
Anky van Deursen

Wayne Chen  
Dan Rich

Krishan Chopra