

2019 - 2020 Seattle City Council Statement of Legislative Intent

Ready for Notebook

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33	5	A	2

Budget Action Title: SDCI led research and recommendation on strategies to support tenants by addressing habitability issues in rental units on a faster timeline

Ongoing: No

Primary Sponsor: Herbold, Lisa

Councilmembers: Johnson; Mosqueda; O'Brien

Staff Analyst: Aly Pennucci

Date	Total	BC	SB	TM	LG	BH	LH	RJ	DJ	MO	KS
	Yes										
	No										
	Abstain										
	Absent										

Statement of Legislative Intent:

This Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) requests that the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) research and recommend ways, both within SDCI and external to SDCI (either internal to the City or in a court proceeding), that renters can have habitability issues addressed on a faster timeline. The response should include strategies or new mechanisms to speed up the process for addressing habitability issues generally, and for an emergency system or proceeding to resolve issues when a notice of eviction related to habitability issues is filed. In addition, the response should address staffing and other resources that would be necessary to stand up each of these strategies.

Background

In September 2018, the Seattle Women's Commission and the Housing Justice Project (HJP) of the King County Bar Association published "[Losing Home: The Human Cost of Eviction in Seattle](#)" report that investigates how current policies and practices contribute to and facilitate the eviction of low-income tenants in Seattle. This report includes two recommendations related to tenants who have been evicted from apartments where there are habitability issues. The first is to prevent evictions from substandard properties (see page 80 of the report). The second recommendation is to create a legal path for tenants to enforce their rights in court (see page 81-82). These are two of the areas to be considered in preparing a response to this SLI.

SDCI is requested to submit a report to the Chair of the Civil Rights, Utilities, Economic Development, and Arts Committee, and to the Executive Director of Council Central Staff, by June 1, 2019.

Responsible Council Committee(s): Civil Rights, Utilities, Economic Development, and Arts Committee

Date Due to Council: June 1, 2019