



City of Seattle
Mayor Edward B. Murray

April 25, 2017

The Honorable Bruce Harrell
Seattle City Council
600 4th Ave, 2nd Floor
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Council President Harrell:

I am transmitting legislation to the City Council that empowers the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) to address the public health and safety risk posed by unsafe vacant buildings. The attached legislation strengthens the standards for securing vacant buildings, hastens the process for removing trash and debris from vacant properties, and creates a new expedited system for ordering the demolition of vacant buildings that have been documented as hazardous. It also reduces the length of time that a fit, vacant building must be unoccupied before a demolition permit can be issued from twelve months to four months.

Hazardous vacant buildings present a public safety risk to neighbors, transient occupants, and first responders who must enter in the event of an emergency. Vacant buildings that do not pose an immediate risk are often the target of illegal salvage and other activities that can increase the likelihood of an emergency incident occurring, in addition to being nuisance to the surrounding community. This legislation is a response to a significant uptick in vacant building issues around the City – complaints regarding vacant buildings are up 58 percent since 2013, while emergency orders to close have increased by 338 percent over the same period.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation. I look forward to working with you to enhance the stewardship of vacant buildings in our city in order to preserve the safety and wellbeing of all residents.

Sincerely,

Edward B. Murray
Mayor of Seattle

cc: Honorable Members of the Seattle City Council