



Legislation Text

File #: Res 31938, Version: 2

CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION modifying the March 14, 2020 emergency order relating to residential evictions.

WHEREAS, on February 29, 2020, Washington Governor Jay Inslee declared a state of emergency in response to new cases of COVID-19, directing state agencies to use all resources necessary to prepare for and respond to the outbreak; and

WHEREAS, on March 3, 2020 the Mayor proclaimed a civil emergency related to the spread of COVID-19, authorizing the Mayor to exercise the emergency powers necessary for the protection of the public peace, safety, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, on March 5, 2020 the Council adopted Resolution 31937 affirming the civil emergency, modifying orders transmitted by the Mayor related to the emergency, and establishing Council's expectations related to future orders and reporting by the Mayor during the civil emergency; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, Washington Governor Jay Inslee amended his emergency order to prohibit gatherings of 250 people or more for social, spiritual and recreational activities including, but not limited to, community, civic, public, leisure, faith-based, or sporting events; parades; concerts; festivals; conventions; fundraisers; and similar activities; and

WHEREAS, on March 12, 2020, Washington Governor Jay Inslee announced that all schools in King, Snohomish, and Pierce Counties will close through April 24, 2020; and

WHEREAS, on March 12, 2020, Public Health - Seattle and King County confirmed 270 cases of COVID-19, including 27 deaths, in King County; and

WHEREAS, in light of COVID-19 spreading person-to-person and particularly between people who are in

close contact with one another, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended that: those who are mildly ill self-isolate by staying home, avoiding public areas, and avoiding transportation; sensitive populations avoid people who are sick; and everyone practice self-distancing; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Legislature has declared a state policy to help residents who are experiencing a temporary crisis in retaining stable housing to avoid eviction from their homes, as expressed in Laws of 2019, ch. 356, § 1; and

WHEREAS, the September 2018 Seattle Women’s Commission and the King County Bar Association’s report *Losing Home: The Human Cost of Eviction in Seattle* (“Losing Home Report”) found that the most disadvantaged groups face the highest likelihood of eviction; and

WHEREAS, the Losing Home report found that most evicted respondents became homeless, with 37.5 percent completely unsheltered, 25.0 percent living in a shelter or transitional housing, and 25.0 percent staying with family or friends. Only 12.5 percent of evicted respondents found another apartment or home to move into; and

WHEREAS, a 2018 investigation by the King County Medical Examiner’s Office found that over half of 107 presumed homeless deaths investigated occurred outside and attributed approximately 121, or 62 percent, of presumed homeless deaths investigated to non-natural causes (drug overdose, accidents (including hypothermia), suicide, homicide, and undetermined), making it clear that people experiencing homelessness have a much higher risk than the general population of developing exposure-related conditions; and

WHEREAS, persons with underlying health conditions are at greater risk of fatality if they catch COVID-19, and preventing individuals from becoming higher-risk patients will protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the region; and

WHEREAS, the impacts of the emerging public health crisis on the economy, employment, job retention, child

care, and businesses may result in: workers being unable to go to work because of illness; the need to care for children home from day care or school or for other family members without paid sick or safe time; and reduced hours due to reduced demand, furlough, or unemployment as businesses struggle during the state of emergency. These risks are compounded especially for workers without paid sick or safe time, those in the “gig economy,” and others without protections that help stabilize income.

Historically disadvantaged populations are already at greater risk of eviction. Compounding existing risk with the impacts from the COVID-19 emergency may increase the likelihood of exposure, spread, and contraction of the virus; and

WHEREAS, in the last two weeks there has been a significant drop in the number of tenants appearing in court for their eviction hearings in King County resulting in default judgments being entered and tenant losing substantial rights to assert defenses or access legal and economic assistance; and

WHEREAS, providing a moratorium on evictions for certain causes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic is necessary as an additional step to protect public health to support stable housing, decrease the likelihood that individuals and families will fall into homelessness, enabling tenants in the City whose income and ability to work is affected due to COVID-19 to remain in their homes; and decrease the likelihood that individuals and families will increase the likelihood of exposure for themselves or others due to an eviction while the COVID-19 emergency exists; and

WHEREAS, on March 14, 2020 the Mayor issued a civil emergency order related to residential evictions; and

WHEREAS, Seattle Municipal Code subsection 10.02.020.B provides that the Seattle City Council can either ratify and confirm, modify, or reject such an order; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE THAT:

Section 1. The Civil Emergency Order relating to residential evictions issued by Mayor Jenny A. Durkan, dated March 14, 2020, attached to this resolution as Exhibit A, is modified, as shown in Exhibit B.

Section 2. The Council requests that the Mayor consider issuing additional emergency orders and make

expenditures pursuant to the authority assumed in Section 3 of the modified Emergency Proclamation provided in Exhibit B to Resolution 31937, to help workers and businesses impacted by the public health crisis on the economy. Additional orders and expenditures to consider include:

A. Increasing funding for programs that provide emergency rental assistance and other financial support to households unable to pay rent due to economic disruptions caused by COVID-19; and

B. Issuing orders or taking other actions to provide rent relief, including deferred payment of rent, requiring payment plans, and other strategies to assist small businesses and nonprofit organizations who are unable to pay rent or pay their employees due to economic disruptions caused by COVID-19.

Adopted by the City Council the _____ day of _____, 2020, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this _____ day of _____, 2020.

President _____ of the City Council

Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2020.

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)

Exhibits:
Exhibit A - Emergency Order Issued March 14, 2020
Exhibit B - Modified Emergency Order