

CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION _____

..title

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

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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

1 WHEREAS, in light of COVID-19 spreading person-to-person and particularly between people
2 who are in close contact with one another, the Centers for Disease Control and
3 Prevention (CDC) has recommended that: those who are mildly ill self-isolate by staying
4 home, avoiding public areas, and avoiding transportation; sensitive populations avoid
5 people who are sick; and everyone practice self-distancing; and

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

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

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

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

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

4 WHEREAS, the impacts of the emerging public health crisis on the economy, employment, job
5 retention, child care, and businesses may result in: workers being unable to go to work
6 because of illness; the need to care for children home from day care or school or for other
7 family members without paid sick or safe time; and reduced hours due to reduced
8 demand, furlough, or unemployment as businesses struggle during the state of
9 emergency. These risks are compounded especially for workers without paid sick or safe
10 time, those in the “gig economy,” and others without protections that help stabilize
11 income. Historically disadvantaged populations are already at greater risk of eviction.
12 Compounding existing risk with the impacts from the COVID-19 emergency may
13 increase the likelihood of exposure, spread, and contraction of the virus; and

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

18 WHEREAS, providing a moratorium on evictions for certain causes resulting from the COVID-
19 19 pandemic is necessary as an additional step to protect public health to support stable
20 housing, decrease the likelihood that individuals and families will fall into homelessness,
21 enabling tenants in the City whose income and ability to work is affected due to COVID-
22 19 to remain in their homes; and decrease the likelihood that individuals and families will

1 increase the likelihood of exposure for themselves or others due to an eviction while the
2 COVID-19 emergency exists; and

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

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

7 THEREFORE,

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

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

12 Section 2. The Council requests that the Mayor consider issuing additional emergency
13 orders and make expenditures pursuant to the authority assumed in Section 3 of the modified
14 Emergency Proclamation provided in Exhibit B to Resolution 31937, to help workers and
15 businesses impacted by the public health crisis on the economy. Additional orders and
16 expenditures to consider include:

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

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

