

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS JANICE HAHN AND
SHEILA KUEHL

October 17, 2017

REPORT ON MOBILE HOME PARK RENT CONTROL ORDINANCE

A growing shortage of housing units continues to result in a critically low vacancy rate, and rapidly rising and exorbitant rents exploiting this shortage continue to cause serious housing problems affecting a substantial portion of residents of the unincorporated area of the Los Angeles County. Such conditions endanger the public health, safety and welfare of the County and its residents. Especially problematic, however, is the issue of low vacancy rates and rapidly rising and exorbitant rents in mobile home parks.

The term "mobile home" can be misleading. As a practical matter, mobile homes are largely immobile because the cost of moving a mobile home can be a substantial fraction of the value of the mobile home itself. Mobile homes are generally placed permanently in parks. A mobile home owner usually rents a plot of land from the owner of a mobile home park. In return, the park owner provides private roads within the park, common facilities and usually utilities. The mobile home owner often invests in park-specific improvements such as a driveways, steps, walkways, porches, or landscaping. As such, unlike a usual tenant, a mobile home owner generally makes a substantial

- MORE -

MOTION

SOLIS _____

KUEHL _____

HAHN _____

BARGER _____

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

investment in the mobile home and its accessories. When a mobile home owner wants to move, the mobile home is usually sold in its place, and the buyer continues to rent the space from the park owner on which the mobile home is located.

In addition, mobile homes are usually occupied by senior citizens and persons of fixed, low, or moderate income upon whom extreme rent adjustments fall with exacting harshness. A mobile home's immobility, a mobile home owner's investments, and restriction on mobile home spaces, sometimes lead to what has been perceived as an economic imbalance of power in mobile home park owners' favor, leading many California cities and counties to adopt mobile home rent control ordinances.

Because of the high cost of moving these mobile dwelling units, potential for damage resulting, the requirements relating to the installation of mobile homes (including permits, landscaping, and site preparation), the lack of alternative home sites for mobile dwelling units, and the substantial investment of mobile home owners in such homes, the Board of Supervisors finds and declares it necessary to protect the owners and occupiers of mobile homes from unreasonable rents and to enable mobile home owners to preserve their equity in their mobile homes while recognizing the need for mobile home owners to receive a fair and just return on their investments and rent increases sufficient to cover their increased costs.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the relevant County departments to report back in writing within 60 days as follows:

Direct the Director of the Department of Regional Planning, in consultation with County Counsel and other relevant departments, to research the feasibility of a proposed ordinance that would protect the owners and residents of mobile homes from unreasonable space rental adjustments while

recognizing and providing guidelines to park owners to obtain a just and reasonable return on their property. The report back, at minimum, shall address the following seven issues:

1. Placing a cap on the amount by which a mobile home park owner can increase the rent for a mobile home park space in a given year; and
2. Protecting against elimination or reduction in services or maintenance by requiring a reduction in rent for a mobile home park space; and
3. Prohibiting a park owner or manager from requiring any mobile home owner or prospective mobile home owner to sign a rental agreement with a term in excess of 12 months as a condition to residence in a mobile home park; and
4. Providing a remedy to mobile home park owners if they believe that they are not receiving a fair rate of return on their property; and
5. Requiring mobile home park owners to complete an annual report providing information about occupancy, rental rates, and uses of the mobile home parks; and
6. Requiring that mobile home park owners post the provisions of the proposed ordinance in the rental offices of the mobile home parks and include the material terms of the ordinance in all rental agreements in the language in which the rental agreement is negotiated; and
7. Developing an education and outreach program regarding the proposed ordinance for mobile home park owners and tenants.

#