

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH

February 4, 2025

**Support for Assembly Bill 246 (Bryan): State of Emergency: Residential Rent**

**Increases: County of Los Angeles: Price Gouging: Enforcement by District**

**Attorney**

As the County of Los Angeles (County) deals with the aftermath of the most destructive wildfires in our history, we must ensure those directly impacted are matched with shelter, both interim and long term. However, at the same time, we cannot make our housing and homelessness crisis worse. Thousands of families are entering the already difficult rental market because of losing their homes in the fires; at the same time, thousands more Angelenos have lost their livelihoods with businesses and commercial districts destroyed and will be struggling financially.

The tremendous impacts are reverberating across the entire County. While price gouging is already prohibited by state and local laws, we have seen bad actors take advantage in a time of crisis. One report found thousands of instances of rental price

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gouging in the first 11 days of the crisis alone.<sup>1</sup> Stronger laws are needed to prevent our housing market from becoming even more unaffordable and to prevent even more people from falling into homelessness. While some jurisdictions, like the County for its unincorporated areas, provide additional protection for some tenants under rent stabilization ordinances, we need a universal standard across the region.

Our lack of housing, especially rental stock, puts the County at the intersection of a natural disaster and a man-made crisis like the lack of available and affordable housing. This is not a time for the free market to be unleashed without guardrails. Supporting State legislation calling for a temporary rent freeze across the County will help us manage both crises.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Office-Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations unit to express support for Assembly Bill 246 (Bryan), which would freeze rental rates in Los Angeles County at the amount charged as of January 7, 2025, authorize the Los Angeles District Attorney to enforce these provisions, and subject a violation of these provisions to a civil penalty of not more than \$10,000 to remain in effect until 12 months after the state of emergency,

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<sup>1</sup> “After the LA Fires: Rent-Gouging in the Wake of the Disaster” The Rent Brigade, January 2025: <https://www.rentbrigade.org/report>