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August 05, 2025

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**APPROVAL OF AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND LOS ANGELES COUNTY CODE,
TITLE 11 – HEALTH AND SAFETY, TO ESTABLISH A MAXIMUM INDOOR
TEMPERATURE THRESHOLD FOR RENTAL HOUSING UNITS IN THE
UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY**

**(ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS)
(3 VOTES)**

SUBJECT

Request approval of the enclosed ordinance that amends Los Angeles County Code, Title 11 – Health and Safety Code to establish a maximum indoor temperature threshold for all rental housing units in the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County and in cities that adopt the Los Angeles County Code. The proposed ordinance will enhance and strengthen the health and safety of occupants residing in rental housing units by ensuring indoor temperatures do not reach levels that are dangerous to health.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD:

Introduce, waive reading, and place on the agenda for adoption, the enclosed Ordinance (Exhibit A) amending Los Angeles County Code, Chapter 11.20 of Title 11 – Health and Safety Code to establish a maximum indoor temperature threshold of 82 degrees Fahrenheit to prevent heat-related health impacts. The ordinance establishes authority for the Department of Public Health (Public Health) to establish a maximum indoor temperature threshold for rental housing units in the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County (LAC) and provides Public Health the ability to enforce in the event there are violations. Enforcement of this ordinance will begin January 1, 2027, or upon approval of the Rental Housing Habitability Program (RHHP) fee as currently set forth in

Los Angeles County Code Chapter 8.53.050, to account for cost recovery associated with this new requirement, whichever is later.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

In March 2023, Public Health released a report titled “[Investigating Safe Maximum Indoor Temperature Thresholds to Assist Heat Vulnerable Tenants and Workers in High-Risk Workplaces](#),”¹ recommending maximum indoor temperature thresholds and an approach for establishing a policy in LAC. LAC is increasingly experiencing higher temperatures and longer heat waves, leading to health and safety risks, heat-related illnesses, and worsened chronic illnesses. Public Health researched heat impacts and similar maximum indoor temperature threshold policies in other jurisdictions and proposed initial recommendations, including the recommendation that workplace heat standards can only be set by the State.

On January 23, 2024, your Board motioned and directed Public Health to work with the County of Los Angeles (County) Chief Sustainability Office, Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA), and County Counsel to develop an ordinance identifying a single maximum indoor temperature threshold for rental housing units in LAC. The motion asked for a “simpler, single-tiered system” that can be implemented through the Health and Safety Code.

Subsequent to the January 2024 motion, Public Health, Chief Sustainability Office, County Counsel, and other relevant County departments met to discuss draft amendments to the County Code. As part of this effort, Public Health hired a contractor to conduct interviews and workgroups to gather feedback, expertise, and insight from key stakeholders, experts, and government officials. The contractor worked with Public Health to identify representatives of different stakeholder groups and recruited and interviewed 10 experts and facilitated six workgroups with: (1) building and energy technical experts; (2) landlords and real estate professionals; (3) legal service providers; (4) tenants’ rights groups and community-based organizations (CBOs); (5) tenants; and (6) local jurisdictions with similar policies. The contractor’s final report on the engagement strategy informed Public Health on development of the ordinance.

In late 2024 and early 2025, Public Health conducted additional stakeholder and community engagement sessions to provide notice of proposed changes and receive feedback, which further shaped the proposed ordinance. During these meetings, public input was received from tenants and landlords, housing stakeholders, and other interested parties. Public Health held six public virtual meetings at various times of day and week, two each in November and December 2024 and February 2025, with live translation into Spanish, Mandarin, and Cantonese. Feedback from the engagement

¹ The report did not make a recommendation regarding high-risk workplaces or mobile homes, as those are regulated by the State.

meetings was shared with Board offices for discussion prior to finalizing the draft ordinance.

Adoption of the Ordinance, will amend Chapter 11.20 of Title 11 – Health and Safety Code to enhance public health and safety by: (1) requiring all rental housing units to maintain a maximum indoor air temperature of 82 degrees Fahrenheit in all habitable rooms; (2) requiring landlords to provide a safe and code-compliant method to maintain the maximum indoor temperature; (3) allowing tenants to install portable cooling devices or other non-mechanical cooling methods, as long as they do not conflict with the requirements set forth in the Ordinance, and (4) authorizing Public Health to establish guidelines for the implementation and enforcement of this Ordinance. The tenant protection provisions connected with the installation of portable cooling devices or other non-mechanical cooling methods, will go into effect thirty (30) days from the date of final passage by the Board of Supervisors, but enforcement of the maximum indoor temperature will commence on January 1, 2027, or upon approval of the fees associated with the cost for this Chapter, whichever is later.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The recommended action supports North Star 2, Foster vibrant and resilient communities, with a focus area goal of public health, of the County's Strategic Plan.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

The fee associated with the Maximum Indoor Temperature Threshold ordinance will be incorporated into the RHHP fee and will be determined in accordance with Auditor-Controller review and approval. While the fee package is still in development and may be subject to change, it is anticipated that new work pursuant to this ordinance will require an estimated \$7.77 fee increase per covered unit. Public Health will return to your Board for approval of new fees, and to submit requests for additional staffing through the budget process.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Your Board has broad authority to adopt the proposed Ordinance that will apply to the unincorporated areas of LAC and in cities that adopt the Los Angeles County Code. The Ordinance pertains to all rental housing units and properties, with some limited exceptions², and all rental housing properties that are required to be registered in the County's Rent Registry System.

² Owner occupied units, short-term rentals subject to Chapter 7.96 of the County Code, mobile homes or recreational vehicles, mobile home parks or recreational vehicle parks, rental properties subject to routine habitability inspections by other local, State or federal government agencies and vacant properties.

The Ordinance will require landlords to ensure that rental housing units can maintain a temperature of 82 degrees Fahrenheit or below in every habitable room. To facilitate passive cooling, i.e., cooling using non-mechanical methods, and early compliance prior to the effective enforcement date, inspectors will provide information to tenants and landlords during regular inspections on passive cooling strategies and best practices with home cooling.

Beginning January 1, 2027, tenant complaints will be assigned to the RHHP inspectors for investigation. Public Health will take an education-first approach starting January 1, 2027, or upon approval of the fee, whichever is later, when responding to complaints, providing education on the Ordinance and effective cooling strategies that can be utilized by both the landlord and tenant. Once landlords have exhausted passive cooling options without achieving compliance with the temperature threshold, they may be required to explore the addition of mechanical cooling such as air conditioning units or heat pumps. In cases where retrofits are needed to achieve compliance, landlords will be allowed to request up to a two-year extension to complete the needed work.

Consistent with existing County policy, landlords of fully covered rental units located in the unincorporated areas of LAC, will not be permitted to pass through costs of needed retrofits to tenants without submitting the appropriate application to DCBA in accordance with the Rent Stabilization and Tenant Protections Ordinance (RSTPO), Los Angeles County Code Chapter 8.52, Section 8.52.070. The existing review process allows landlords to request to pass through 50% of capital improvement costs over an amortization period, although rent increases are capped at three percent (3%) for fully covered units, four percent (4%) for Small Property Landlords; or five percent (5%) for luxury units. DCBA has discretion to allow pass-throughs exceeding the rental cap if determined the landlord is not receiving a fair return on their property. The pass-through costs associated with the installation of portable cooling, or “window”, units will not be allowed under RSTPO.

If a tenant wishes to install additional cooling through portable cooling devices or non-mechanical cooling methods, they are allowed to do so under this Ordinance. Tenants wishing to install additional cooling will be required to notify the landlord prior to installation. Installation must comply with existing building codes, the manufacturer’s written safety guidelines and recommendations for use of the device. Tenants may not alter or modify the rental unit to carry out the installation.

Tenants located in the unincorporated areas of LAC facing harassment and/or retaliation for exercising their rights as described in the Ordinance by installing portable cooling devices, will be afforded the anti-harassment and/or retaliation protections set forth in the County’s RSTPO.

To incentivize and promote compliance with the Ordinance, County Internal Services Department (ISD) created a dedicated website offering free technical assistance and

resources for landlords and tenants to support early adoption. The website, www.CoolHealthyHomes.org, will be live mid-July. The website will include information on the ordinance and enforcement, tips on how to stay cool, information on tenant's rights, financial help, technical resources, and more.

Tenants and landlords in unincorporated LAC will also be able to access technical assistance through Clean Power Alliance's (CPA) Energy Team that provides free expert help on electrical upgrades, cooling strategies, financial rebates, and more. Additionally, low-income California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) and Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA) customers are eligible for a discounted energy-efficient air conditioner from CPA's Instant AC Savings Program.

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the proposed Ordinance (Exhibit A), as to content and form.

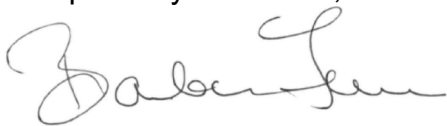
IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

Public Health anticipates that adoption of this Ordinance will require at least two new inspectors to offset the additional time needed to respond to indoor air temperature complaints as part of the RHHP.

CONCLUSION

If adopted, the amended Ordinance will establish a maximum indoor temperature threshold in rental housing units in the unincorporated areas of LAC and in cities that adopt the Los Angeles County Code, to address negative heat-related health impacts.

Respectfully submitted,



Barbara Ferrer, PH.D., M.P.H., M.Ed.
Director

BF:db
#08248

Enclosure

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

ANALYSIS

This ordinance amends Chapter 11.20 of Title 11 – Health and Safety of the Los Angeles County Code to establish a maximum indoor temperature threshold for rental housing units. The ordinance:

- Requires that rental housing units in the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County and in cities that adopt the Los Angeles County Code must be able to maintain a maximum indoor temperature of 82 degrees Fahrenheit in all Habitable rooms;
- Allows tenants to provide additional cooling methods, if done in a safe and code-compliant way;
- Updates tenant protections to ensure code-compliant cooling practices are not a cause for eviction and restricts landlords from passing on the cost of certain equipment installation onto tenants; and
- Adopts an effective date of thirty (30) days from the date of final passage by the Board of Supervisors and an enforcement date beginning on January 1, 2027, to provide time for outreach and education efforts, or upon approval of the fee as set forth in Chapter 8.53.050 to account for cost recovery, whichever is later; and
- Allows landlords of already existing rental properties to request an extension of two years for compliance if unable to meet the maximum indoor temperature requirement through portable cooling methods by the enforcement date.

DAWYN R. HARRISON
County Counsel

By 
VANESSA MIRANDA
Deputy County Counsel

VM:mac

Requested	8/21/24
Revised	6/10/25

ORDINANCE NO. _____

An ordinance amending Chapter 11.20 of Title 11 – Health and Safety of the Los Angeles County Code to establish a maximum indoor temperature threshold for rental housing units.

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles ordains as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 11.20.130 is hereby added to read as follows:

11.20.130 Portable Cooling Device.

"Portable Cooling Device" means a self-contained mechanical device designed to cool a Habitable room that includes devices that are temporarily affixed or mounted and/or secured for use but can be easily removed or relocated without permanent attachment to the structure. This includes, but is not limited to, portable air conditioners, evaporative coolers, and window-mounted air conditioning units. A Portable Cooling Device may operate using electricity, water evaporation, or other methods to reduce air temperature.

SECTION 2. Section 11.20.475 is hereby added to read as follows:

11.20.475 Maximum Indoor Temperature Threshold.

A. For purposes of this Section, the terms Landlord, Tenant, Rental Housing Property, and Rental Housing Unit have the same meanings as stated in Chapter 8.53 of this Code.

B. Cooling Requirements. Every Rental Housing Unit must be able to maintain a maximum indoor temperature of not more than 82 degrees Fahrenheit in all Habitable rooms which are defined in Section 11.20.090.

C. Landlord Duty. The Landlord must provide a safe and code-compliant method in which all Habitable room(s) can be maintained at the maximum indoor temperature of not more than 82 degrees Fahrenheit.

D. Tenant Installation of Portable Cooling Device. A Landlord may not prohibit or restrict a Tenant from installing or using, at Tenant's own cost, a Portable Cooling Device or other non-mechanical cooling methods, including, but not limited to, blackout curtains, window films, or shades, to provide additional cooling below 82 degrees Fahrenheit as long as such installation and use does not:

1. Violate building codes, or State, local, or federal law;
2. Violate the manufacturer's written safety guidelines and recommendations for use for the Portable Cooling Device; or
3. Require the Tenant to alter or modify the Rental Unit as a result of such installation.

E. Prior to installing a Portable Cooling Device or other non-mechanical cooling method with the exception of a portable electric fan, the Tenant must provide five (5) calendar days advance written notice to the Landlord, either electronically or through written communication. Any Portable Cooling Device or other non-mechanical cooling method installed in a Habitable room(s) which was acquired by a Tenant, at Tenant's own cost, shall remain the property of the Tenant. The Tenant shall be responsible for any damage to a Rental Housing Unit or Rental Housing Property caused by a Tenant's installation or use of a cooling method as listed above.

F. Pass-through Costs. The installation of a Portable Cooling Device used to maintain a Habitable room(s) at the maximum indoor temperature of 82 degrees Fahrenheit is not considered a capital improvement and not allowed as a pass-through cost to Tenants who reside in a Fully Covered Rental Unit as set forth in Chapter 8.52 of this Code.

G. Temperature Measurement. All temperature measurements shall be taken at a distance three (3) feet above the floor level in the center of the Habitable room(s).

H. Tenant Protections. A Landlord must not retaliate against or harass a Tenant for exercising rights protected under this Section. Violations are subject to the remedies and penalties set forth in Section 8.52.130.

I. Enforcement. For the purposes of this Section, Rental Housing Properties and/or Units, located within the unincorporated areas of the County, that have an initial complaint filed with the department for non-compliance with this requirement will be provided with additional time to bring the Rental Housing Property and/or Unit into compliance prior to being subject to the inspection and enforcement provisions as set forth in Sections 8.53.105 and 8.53.120 of this Code.

J. Fees. Every Rental Housing unit shall be required to pay a fee as set forth in Section 8.04.720 of this Code.

K. Effective Date. The provisions of this Chapter shall go into effect thirty (30) days from the date of final passage by the Board of Supervisors. Enforcement for failure to comply with provisions of this Chapter related to maintaining a maximum indoor temperature of not more than eighty-two (82) degrees Fahrenheit in

Rental Housing Units shall commence on January 1, 2027, or upon approval of the fee as set forth in Chapter 8.53.050 to account for cost recovery for the department associated with this Chapter, whichever is later.

L. Adoption of Ordinance by Cities. This ordinance shall be effective within the territorial jurisdiction of each city that incorporates the entirety of this ordinance into its municipal code by adoption or resolution, with the exception of the protections afforded for Fully Covered Rental Units under the County's Rent Stabilization and Tenant Protections Ordinance in Chapter 8.52 of this Code, as set forth in Section F above.

M. Extensions. If a Landlord is unable to comply with this Section through the installation of a Portable Cooling Device, or other non-mechanical cooling methods, upon written application by a Landlord, an extension may be granted by the Director or their designee for up to an additional two (2) years to come into compliance for Rental Housing Units beyond the effective enforcement date of January 1, 2027.

[CH11PT1VMCC]