



*Legal Aid's mission is to promote social justice and  
advance basic human rights for vulnerable people in our community.*

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December 19, 2022

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Sent via email to [cityclerk@cityofpetaluma.org](mailto:cityclerk@cityofpetaluma.org)

RE: Consent Calendar Item 2: Tentative Agenda for Meeting of January 9, 2023

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To the Honorable Petaluma City Council and Staff,

We appreciate that the Residential Tenancy Protections Ordinance ("Ordinance") is in effect and up for extension on the tentative agenda for January 9th. As a community stakeholder who assists tenants and unhoused folks in Petaluma and the surrounding County with evictions and access to housing/benefits, Legal Aid commends City Council for their commitment to comprehensive tenant protections. Petaluma tenants have the type of protections that are in place in thirty (30) other California cities and counties!

Since October 1<sup>st</sup> when the County Eviction Moratorium expired, there have been 132 new cases at Legal Aid, but only 10 from Petaluma despite it being the County's second most populous City.

It would be a tragedy for the Ordinance to sunset, at any time. LASC urges City Council to add options to the tentative agenda for City Council's consideration on January 9<sup>th</sup>. We request that they have the option to extend the Ordinance until substantive amendments are adopted, and an option to adopt it permanently with the ability to amend as needed. If there are unintended consequences of the Ordinance, it can always be brought back for amendment. But if it is allowed to sunset in March or some future date, the tenants who are displaced as a result cannot be returned to the community.

As noted in my previous letter, the Ordinance is thoughtfully rooted in commonality. It is clearly comprised of elements of several different just cause ordinances across California. There are now 31 such ordinances in effect including Petaluma, and others being considered, including within the City of Sonoma.

I commend City Council for seeing their commitment to tenant protections through! I urge you to add these two options, to allow the new City Council to make the Ordinance more permanent and ultimately to ensure Petaluma is a place that is truly accessible for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'm de', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Margaret DeMatteo, Housing Policy Attorney