

From: [REDACTED]
To: [-- City Clerk](#)
Subject: Public Comment on Residential Tenancy Protections
Date: Thursday, April 13, 2023 6:24:34 PM

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April 13, 2023

City Council of Petaluma
11 English St.
Petaluma, CA 94952

RE: Residential Tenancy Protections

Dear Council Members,

I have been a resident of Petaluma since 1978 and have owned two primary residences since moving here along with a small condo on the eastside of town which is currently rented out. Nine years ago I completely redid the condo: painted ceiling to floor, all new lighting fixtures, new interior doors and hardware, new sinks/faucets, countertop, all new flooring, new window coverings, refinished all the oak cabinetry and added new appliances. At that time, it was my plan to rent it for a few years and then sell my large home and retire to the condo so I put in higher quality materials.

Since then my plans have changed as my adult children and grandchildren, along with my sister and brother-in-law have moved to Western Washington, encouraging me to join them. My wonderful job was eliminated during Covid and now at age 72, I will be putting my home on the market in the next month or two.

I had a brief opportunity to access the condo in early February when the tenant needed a new heater. It became very apparent that she was not taking care of the condo, heater had not been cleaned nor the filter changed since she moved in. I was allowed only into the entryway and kitchen, it was clear that there was what I would term very excessive wear and tear from the little I could see. Original landscaping was gone, she had put small raised beds directly on the concrete which will erode it, most of the paint on the inside of the front door was gone, place was quite dirty, etc.). The front door locks had been changed (I had put in new Schlage locks when she moved in) and no keys had been provided to me. There were signs that she was subletting a room and I later was able to find out the subtenant's name, age and place of employment. Her car has been parked in the dedicated covered parking space which I have checked several times.

I informed her during that visit in February that I was selling my home, planning to move to Washington and was considering selling the condo to supplement my Social Security. I stated that at my age and moving so far away, I did not want to be a long distance landlord. Shortly thereafter I notified her in writing that I wanted to do a thorough walk through with my realtor to assess any needed repairs and to decide

what the market value might be which would determine whether to sell or not. I asked her to choose a date and time the following week and requested copies of the keys. There was no response. A month later in March, I gave her a 24hr notice that I would be arriving at the condo with my realtor for a walk through. Again she stalled and refused saying that she couldn't let us in until the end of May. We did show up and she did not answer the door.

At that time I became aware of the Residential Tenancy Protection ordinance passed last fall. It became clear to me that in spite of a lease, my tenant could not easily be evicted in spite of violations and that I might have to sell with her in place. Without being able to get in, clean up and do repairs, I stand to lose quite a bit on my investment which impacts my quality of life in retirement. I don't have much in the way of savings and 401k, the condo was to make up for that.

I contacted five attorneys; one had recently retired and the other four will not touch Petaluma landlord/tenant issues due to this ordinance. I called and had a long talk with Don Cohn who was able to give me the name of the one attorney in the county that will take on these cases. She has studied the ordinance in depth. The violations of the lease are in the process of being addressed and hopefully I will gain access to the condo on Friday, April 14th. However it still will not make it easy to get rid of a problem tenant - there have been multiple other issues not addressed in this letter, including withholding rent and damage to the bathroom - and my ability to sell the condo in a **timely** matter at the best market price.

I understand that tenants need protection and due to both wildfires and Covid, rentals are in short supply, but where are my rights to deal with the property that I own, pay taxes and insurance on? Especially at my age? This is a grossly unfair ordinance and will discourage property owners from considering opening up potential rentals, and may result in more owners working to dispose of their current rentals. My realtor currently owns two properties, one in which she and her husband live and the other is one that they are renovating to make their future home. They were planning on putting their current condo on the rental market, but now will sell it instead.

My attorney has made me aware of the meeting on April 17th which I will be attending.

Sincerely,

Sharon L Wilson

[REDACTED]

Petaluma, CA 94954