

BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT BRAGG

AN URGENCY ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF FORT BRAGG RELATING TO A TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON EVICTING TENANTS AND DECLARING THE ORDINANCE TO BE AN EMERGENCY MEASURE TO TAKE EFFECT IMMEDIATELY UPON ADOPTION

**URGENCY ORDINANCE
NO. 960-2020**

WHEREAS, on March 4, 2020, the Governor declared a State of Emergency in California due to the threat of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (“COVID-19”).

WHEREAS, on March 4, 2020, the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors and Department of Public Health declared a public health emergency in Mendocino County due to COVID-19.

WHEREAS, on March 16, 2020, the Governor issued Executive Order N-28-20. The order suspends any state law that would preempt or otherwise restrict the City’s exercise of its police power to impose substantive limitations on evictions based on nonpayment of rent resulting from the impacts of COVID-19.

WHEREAS, a copy of the Governor’s executive order is attached hereto as Exhibit 1.

WHEREAS, on March 17, 2020, the Fort Bragg City Manager, acting as the Director of Emergency Services, declared a local emergency due to COVID-19, which was ratified by the City Council at its March 24, 2020 City Council meeting.

WHEREAS, on March 18, 2020, the Mendocino County Health Official issued a Shelter-in-Place Order.

WHEREAS, on March 19, 2020, the Governor issued Executive Order N-33-20 which orders California Residents to stay at home except for certain critical activities. Due to directives from federal, state, and local health officials, residents have been advised to avoid public gatherings and stay at home to prevent the spread of this disease.

WHEREAS, the City has been impacted by the health crisis of this global pandemic. Essentially all upcoming social gatherings and events have been cancelled. Mendocino School Districts have issued closures which may extend beyond April 14, 2020. Employees have been advised to work at home. As a result, restaurant and retail business has significantly declined and workers have been impacted by lost wages and layoffs. Parents have had to miss work to care for home-bound school-age children. As the virus spreads, workers may have to stay home for extended periods.

WHEREAS, many tenants have experienced sudden income loss, and further income

impacts are anticipated. The loss of wages caused by the effects of COVID-19 may impact tenants' ability to pay rent when due, leaving tenants vulnerable to eviction.

WHEREAS, evictions resulting from the conditions identified in Executive Order N-28-20 present an immediate threat to the public peace, health and safety, as described in Government Code section 36937(b) in that they will potentially cause the irregular and increased displacement of residents and commercial businesses, contribute to an increase in the homeless population in City of Fort Bragg, and make it more difficult for the City to enforce the shelter-in-place order designed to promote public health through social distancing to combat the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

WHEREAS, nothing in this Ordinance waives a tenant's obligations to pay back rent owed once this Ordinance is no longer effective.

WHEREAS, the City Council has the authority to adopt this Ordinance under Government Code Section 8630, and also its authority under California Constitution Art XI, section 7, and pursuant to the Governor's Order N-28-20.

NOW THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT BRAGG DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Findings and Emergency Declaration.

The City Council finds and declares as follows:

- A. The provisions of the Governor's Executive Order N-28-20, including its recitals, are incorporated herein as if fully set forth.
- B. The above recitals, and the recitals in the Governor's Executive Order N-28-20, are true and correct.
- C. In order to address the immediate threat to the public peace, health and safety, this ordinance temporarily prohibits evictions throughout the City of Fort Bragg related to the existence of the COVID-19 pandemic emergency.
- D. This ordinance is an emergency measure, to take effect immediately upon adoption pursuant to California Government Code section 36934 based on the facts recited above.

SECTION 2. Moratorium on evictions due to nonpayment of rent during the COVID-19 emergency.

Pursuant to the general police power of the City to protect the health, safety and welfare of its citizens, the authority of any landlord to commence evictions on any residential or commercial property within the incorporated area for the following reasons is hereby suspended through May 31, 2020, including any extensions unless otherwise terminated:

- A. The basis of the eviction is non-payment of rent, or a foreclosure, arising out of a

substantial decrease in household or business income (including but not limited to, a substantial decrease in household income caused by layoffs or a reduction in the number of compensable hours of work, or a substantial decrease in business income caused by a reduction in opening hours or consumer demand), or substantial out-of-pocket medical expenses; and

- B. The decrease in household or business income or the out-of-pocket medical expenses describe in subparagraph (a) was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, or by any local, state, or federal government response to COVID-19, and is documented; and
- C. To take advantage of the protections afforded under this Ordinance, a tenant must do all the following:
 - a. Notify the landlord in writing seven (7) days before the day rent is due that the tenant has a covered reason for delayed payment, except rent due April 1, 2020;
 - b. Provide the landlord with verifiable documentation to support the assertion of a covered reason for delayed payment within thirty (30) days of the day the rent is due.

Nothing in this ordinance shall relieve a tenant of the obligation to pay rent, nor restrict a landlord's ability to recover rent due.

SECTION 3. Other Provisions.

- A. All public housing authorities operating in the City are requested to extend deadlines for housing assistance recipients or applicants to deliver records or documents related to their eligibility for programs, to the extent that those deadlines are within the discretion of the housing authority.
- B. Financial institutions in the City holding home or commercial mortgages, including banks, credit unions, government-sponsored enterprises, and institutional investors, are requested to implement an immediate moratorium on foreclosures and related evictions when the foreclosure or foreclosure-related eviction arises out of a substantial decrease in household or business income, or substantial out-of-pocket medical expenses, which were caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, or by any local, state, or federal government response to COVID-19.
- C. This ordinance shall be liberally construed to provide the broadest possible protection for the citizens of the City.
- D. The City Manager and all other City officers and department heads are authorized and directed to take such other and further actions as may be necessary or appropriate to implement the intent and purposes of this ordinance.
- E. Tenants may use the protections afforded in this ordinance as an affirmative defense in an eviction action, including but not limited to an action for unlawful

detainer.

- F. This ordinance may be enforced as stated in the provisions of this ordinance, as a violation of City Code, as a nuisance, or by any other available and legal enforcement mechanism.

SECTION 4. 180-Day Repayment Period.

Tenants who were afforded eviction protection under Section 2 of this ordinance shall have up to 180 days after the expiration on May 31, 2020, including any extensions, to pay their landlord all unpaid rent accrued during the term covered by this ordinance. During that 180-day period, the protections against eviction found in Section 2 of this Ordinance apply for such tenants, and provided the tenant pays all rent due by this deadline, shall not be liable for payment of any late fees or penalties for the delay in payment.

SECTION 5. Severability. If any portion of this Ordinance is found to be unenforceable, each such provision shall be severed, and all remaining portions of this Ordinance shall be enforced to the maximum extent legally permissible.

SECTION 6. Certification. The City Clerk shall certify to the passage and adoption of this Ordinance as required by law.

The foregoing Urgency Ordinance was introduced by Councilmember Norvell and adopted at a special meeting of the City Council of the City of Fort Bragg held on March 30, 2020 by the following vote:

AYES: Councilmembers Albin-Smith, Morsell-Haye, Norvell, Peters and Mayor Lee.
NOES: None.
ABSENT: None.
ABSTAIN: None.
RECUSED: None.

William V. Lee,
Mayor

ATTEST:

June Lemos, CMC
City Clerk

PUBLISH: April 9, 2020 (by summary).
EFFECTIVE DATE: March 30, 2020.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

EXECUTIVE ORDER N-28-20

WHEREAS on March 4, 2020, I proclaimed a State of Emergency to exist in California as a result of the threat of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS despite sustained efforts, the virus remains a threat, and further efforts to control the spread of the virus to reduce and minimize the risk of infection and otherwise mitigate the effects of COVID-19 are needed; and

WHEREAS the economic impacts of COVID-19 have been significant, and could threaten to undermine Californians' housing security and the stability of California businesses; and

WHEREAS many Californians are experiencing substantial losses of income as a result of business closures, the loss of hours or wages, or layoffs related to COVID-19, hindering their ability to keep up with their rents, mortgages, and utility bills; and

WHEREAS Californians who are most vulnerable to COVID-19, those 65 years and older, and those with underlying health issues, are advised to self-quarantine, self-isolate, or otherwise remain in their homes to reduce the transmission of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS because homelessness can exacerbate vulnerability to COVID-19, California must take measures to preserve and increase housing security for Californians to protect public health; and

WHEREAS local jurisdictions, based on their particular needs, may therefore determine that additional measures to promote housing security and stability are necessary to protect public health or to mitigate the economic impacts of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS local jurisdictions may also determine, based on their particular needs, that promoting stability amongst commercial tenancies is also conducive to public health, such as by allowing commercial establishments to decide whether and how to remain open based on public health concerns rather than economic pressures, or to mitigate the economic impacts of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS in addition to these public health benefits, state and local policies to promote social distancing, self-quarantine, and self-isolation require that people be able to access basic utilities—including water, gas, electricity, and telecommunications—at their homes, so that Californians can work from home, receive public health information, and otherwise adhere to policies of social distancing, self-quarantine, and self-isolation, if needed; and



WHEREAS many utility providers, public and private, covering electricity, gas, water, and sewer, have voluntarily announced moratoriums on service disconnections and late fees for non-payment in response to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS many telecommunication companies, including internet and cell phone providers, have voluntarily announced moratoriums on service disconnections and late fees for non-payment in response to COVID-19;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor of the State of California, in accordance with the authority vested in me by the State Constitution and statutes of the State of California, and in particular, Government Code sections 8567 and 8571, do hereby issue the following order to become effective immediately:

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

- 1) The time limitation set forth in Penal Code section 396, subdivision (f), concerning protections against residential eviction, is hereby waived. Those protections shall be in effect through May 31, 2020.
- 2) Any provision of state law that would preempt or otherwise restrict a local government's exercise of its police power to impose substantive limitations on residential or commercial evictions as described in subparagraphs (i) and (ii) below—including, but not limited to, any such provision of Civil Code sections 1940 et seq. or 1954.25 et seq.—is hereby suspended to the extent that it would preempt or otherwise restrict such exercise. This paragraph 2 shall only apply to the imposition of limitations on evictions when:
 - (i) The basis for the eviction is nonpayment of rent, or a foreclosure, arising out of a substantial decrease in household or business income (including, but not limited to, a substantial decrease in household income caused by layoffs or a reduction in the number of compensable hours of work, or a substantial decrease in business income caused by a reduction in opening hours or consumer demand), or substantial out-of-pocket medical expenses; and
 - (ii) The decrease in household or business income or the out-of-pocket medical expenses described in subparagraph (i) was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, or by any local, state, or federal government response to COVID-19, and is documented.

The statutory cause of action for judicial foreclosure, Code of Civil Procedure section 725a et seq.; the statutory cause of action for unlawful detainer, Code of Civil Procedure section 1161 et seq., and any other statutory cause of action that could be used to evict or otherwise eject a residential or commercial tenant or occupant of residential real property after foreclosure is suspended only as applied to any tenancy, or residential real property and any

occupation thereof, to which a local government has imposed a limitation on eviction pursuant to this paragraph 2, and only to the extent of the limitation imposed by the local government.

Nothing in this Order shall relieve a tenant of the obligation to pay rent, nor restrict a landlord's ability to recover rent due.

The protections in this paragraph 2 shall be in effect through May 31, 2020, unless extended.

- 3) All public housing authorities are requested to extend deadlines for housing assistance recipients or applicants to deliver records or documents related to their eligibility for programs, to the extent that those deadlines are within the discretion of the housing authority.
- 4) The Department of Business Oversight, in consultation with the Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency, shall engage with financial institutions to identify tools to be used to afford Californians relief from the threat of residential foreclosure and displacement, and to otherwise promote housing security and stability during this state of emergency, in furtherance of the objectives of this Order.
- 5) Financial institutions holding home or commercial mortgages, including banks, credit unions, government-sponsored enterprises, and institutional investors, are requested to implement an immediate moratorium on foreclosures and related evictions when the foreclosure or foreclosure-related eviction arises out of a substantial decrease in household or business income, or substantial out-of-pocket medical expenses, which were caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, or by any local, state, or federal government response to COVID-19.
- 6) The California Public Utilities Commission is requested to monitor measures undertaken by public and private utility providers to implement customer service protections for critical utilities, including but not limited to electric, gas, water, internet, landline telephone, and cell phone service, in response to COVID-19, and on a weekly basis publicly report these measures.

Nothing in this Order shall be construed to invalidate any limitation on eviction enacted by a local jurisdiction between March 4, 2020 and this date.

Nothing in this Order shall in any way restrict state or local authority to order any quarantine, isolation, or other public health measure that may compel an individual to remain physically present in a particular residential real property.

This Order is not intended to, and does not, create any rights or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, against the State of California, its agencies, departments, entities, officers, employees, or any other person.

I FURTHER DIRECT that as soon as hereafter possible, this proclamation be filed in the Office of the Secretary of State and that widespread publicity and notice be given of this Order.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 16th day of March 2020.



GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor of California

ATTEST:

ALEX PADILLA
Secretary of State