



July 1, 2025

Arturo Cruz, Mayor
Elizabeth Pabon-Alvarado, Vice-Mayor
Rita Xavier, Councilmember
Abel Pineda, Councilmember
Patricia Ponce, Councilmember

Re: San Pablo City Council Special Meeting on Renter Protections

Dear Members of the San Pablo City Council,

As you meet tomorrow to discuss proposed renter protections for tenants in San Pablo, East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO) writes to share our strong support for Just Cause for Eviction Protections and Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinances. EBHO is a member-driven organization comprising over 400 individual and organizational members in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Our members include residents of affordable housing, social service providers, architects, tenant advocacy organizations, legal service providers, and non-profit developers of affordable housing. For over 40 years we have mobilized our members to advocate around the “3 Ps” of affordable housing: Production, Preservation, and Protections. We have worked with numerous jurisdictions to assist with the design and implementation of fair, effective, and equity-centered tenant protections.

Our letter today focuses only on Just Cause and Tenant Anti-Harassment protections as we understand that to be the current focus of your work. However, we must stress our continued support for Rent Stabilization as a policy to be paired with these other two protections. Without fair and effective Rent Stabilization, any other tenant protections are easily circumvented by landlords raising rents drastically and arbitrarily, forcing tenants to leave properties they can no longer afford. We urge you to follow up your work on these two critical protections by enacting a Rent Stabilization policy that precludes this possibility.

Just Cause for Eviction

Just Cause for Eviction (Just Cause) protections are based on the simple premise that, as long as one follows the rules of their lease and pays the rent on time, everybody has a basic right to stability in housing. Further, our communities are all healthier and more stable when we decrease the rate of unnecessary evictions and prioritize keeping people in their homes.

Eviction is a traumatic experience that has been linked to significant negative outcomes in health, economic stability, and educational outcomes for youth. Of course, eviction's most devastating consequence is homelessness. With eviction listed as one of the leading causes of homelessness in Contra Costa County's 2023 homelessness Point-In-Time Count, San Pablo has the responsibility to do everything it can to prevent unjust evictions in our community.¹

Notably, without Just Cause protections, only *tenants* are vulnerable to retaliatory, arbitrary, or discriminatory evictions. Property owners cannot have their homes foreclosed without cause (failure to pay the mortgage or property taxes). Just Cause extends these protections to tenants with the understanding that everybody in our community has an equal right to know where they will be able to stay next month if they pay the rent and behave in accordance with the terms of their lease this month.

Just Cause does leave much flexibility for landlords to evict tenants, whether in response to a tenant's violation of the lease, or in cases where a property owner decides independently of the tenant's behavior that they need to vacate the property (e.g. to move into the property themselves, to remove the unit from the rental market, or to conduct significant renovations). In this way, Just Cause does not unduly burden or constrain landlords; but by requiring relocation assistance in the case of no-fault evictions, does extend some basic levels of stability and security to all community members.

Despite a state law that provides some Just Cause protections for tenants ([AB 1482](#)), a San Pablo Just Cause ordinance is both justified and necessary. Most importantly, the State protections will expire in 2030, leaving all San Pablo tenants vulnerable to arbitrary and unjustified eviction and displacement. But even before that sunset date, the protections contained in AB 1482 are widely understood to be insufficient to meet the needs of all communities. The law applies to a very limited set of tenants and requires insufficient relocation assistance in the event of no-fault evictions. To earnestly protect our most vulnerable residents, San Pablo must enact a Just Cause ordinance that matches the needs of our community.

Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinances

Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinances (TAHO) form a critical component of any jurisdiction's tenant protection laws. Of the four cities with existing tenant protections examined in the RSG Consultant's Report attached to this meeting's agenda, every single one included TAHO as part

¹ Contra Costa County Health, Housing, and Homelessness, [2023 Point-In-Time Count Summary](#), June 13, 2023. While a 2024 PIT Count Summary has since been published, it does not include information on leading causes of homelessness as the 2023 Count does.

of their renter protections. In fact, almost every jurisdiction in the Bay Area that has enacted any type of renter protection ordinance has included TAHO alongside or as part of those protections.

The results of tenant harassment and retaliatory behavior by landlords are not about surface level or personal disputes between landlords and tenants. Tenant harassment can mean refusing to complete repairs, leaving a building uninhabitable. It can mean making a tenant's life miserable through intimidation, threat of eviction, inappropriate entry into the dwelling unit, or conducting constant, elective construction on the unit. It can also include making intimidating comments or threats to contact immigration officials, a practice that has sadly become all too common among Bay Area landlords.

While all of these practices are worthy of preventing on their own, they can all also lead to self-eviction. Self-eviction continues to be a major issue and driver of displacement for Bay Area tenants. In its guidance on local housing policy, the Bay Area's Metropolitan Transportation Commission states that "Informal evictions through tenant harassment are a persistent problem for low-income, undocumented, and/or limited English-speaking residents because these populations are especially vulnerable to landlord actions."² This is why it is critical to include TAHO protections alongside Just Cause for Eviction and other complementary tenant protections. Without them, landlords can simply get around other protections by harassing tenants until they choose to vacate the property on their own.

While state law does outline some protections tenants have from harassing or retaliatory behavior on the part of landlords, according to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), "State law lacks specific language defining harassing behavior, which can make violations difficult to prove in court."³ For this reason, landlord harassment has proliferated in the face of state law, and ABAG encourages local governments to develop their own TAHO protections as a critical tool in protecting tenants and preventing displacement.

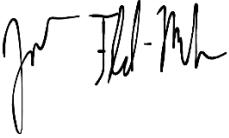
Finally, including TAHO and anti-retaliation protections for tenant organizing reduces administrative burden for the City. Tenants who organize freely and without fear of retaliation are far more likely to resolve tenant-landlord disputes independently, without petitioning for relief or a hearing from the City. Any analysis of the cost of administering new tenant protections must take this into account and, if San Pablo wishes to decrease the cost of enforcing its tenant protections, empower tenants to take an active role in enforcing the protections without fear of retaliation.

² Metropolitan Transportation Commission, [Administrative Guidance for MTC's Transit-Oriented Communities Policy](#), May, 2025, pg. 56

³ Association of Bay Area Governments and Metropolitan Transportation Commission, [Tenant Anti-Harassment Protections](#), April 7, 2025.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joey Flegel-Mishlove". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joey" written in a stylized, looped manner, followed by "Flegel-Mishlove" in a more straightforward but still cursive script.

Joey Flegel-Mishlove
Policy Associate
East Bay Housing Organizations