



THE CALIFORNIA APARTMENT ASSOCIATION

1033 B St. Suite, 300 | Coronado | California | 92118

June 1, 2020

The Honorable San Diego City Council
City Administration Building
202 C Street, San Diego, CA 92118

Dear City of San Diego Councilmembers:

On behalf of the California Apartment Association (CAA), I am writing to urge your support of Councilmember Ward's proposal to dedicate \$61,900,000 of the City of San Diego's federal CARES Act funding to create a citywide emergency rental assistance program. This program will offer a critically needed economic lifeline to San Diegans to help them stay in their homes, while also providing support for property owners and lenders.

As you are aware, the coronavirus has had a profound impact on our region, and many working families are facing unprecedented loss of income in an already challenging economy. More than 1 in 4 San Diegans are unemployed, making it increasingly challenging for individuals and families to cover basic expenses, including rent. Landlords and property owners also face dramatic income disruption, which leaves them unable to pay mortgages.

While the City has appropriately provided millions of dollars of direct financial assistance for small businesses and childcare expenses, it's critical to also do everything possible to keep city residents in their homes and financially viable.

The City of San Diego has approximately 270,000 units that are renter-occupied, and almost two-thirds of renter households are in the extremely low-income, very low-income, or low-income groups (<80% AMI). While the City's Moratorium on Residential and Commercial Evictions has provided short-term relief, without financial assistance especially supporting lower-income San Diegans to cover lost income that would otherwise cover basic housing costs, these protections are merely delaying eviction and further crises which the City will have to deal with eventually. All efforts to provide funding for prevention now will be an investment that is far cheaper than the future consequences of inaction.

Everyone recognizes that there is not currently enough funding available to fully address the catastrophic impacts that COVID-19 has brought for San Diegans, and we will all continue to advocate for more. But we have an obligation to provide the most effective, best targeted assistance we can to relieve these impacts to the greatest extent possible. This rental assistance program is a critical component of those efforts.

Please support the proposed emergency rental assistance program at City Council and help keep San Diegans in their homes and help our economy begin to recover.

The California Apartment Association is an organization of 50,000 rental property owners and managers who own and operate approximately 2 million rental homes and apartments throughout California.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Whitney Benzian
Vice President of Public Affairs
California Apartment Association, San Diego Office.