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Sounding the Alarm: End of Eviction Protections may put thousands of SB County residents at risk for displacement

On June 30, 2022, the eviction moratorium protection for those with pending application for emergency rental assistance will end. The California legislature approved Assembly Bill (AB) 2179, extending the state's eviction moratorium through June 30, 2022 for certain tenants who have applied for rental assistance on or before March 31, 2022. The 3-month extension was intended to provide the state and local jurisdictions additional time to process applications and disburse funds without tenants being at risk of eviction.

In San Bernardino county, over 400,000 applications were completed and a little more than 329,000 have been served. It is unclear how many of the nearly 80,000 people still pending service will face eviction. However, it is clear that cities like San Bernardino, Rialto, Fontana, Adelanto, areas where low-income Black and Brown renters live, have the highest risk for potential displacement, according to the Urban Displacement Project.¹ This correlates with findings of a recent Public Record Request submitted to San Bernardino county which shows over 10,000 unlawful detainers filed in 2019 and over 6,000 filed in 2021 likely at the end of the first eviction moratorium on September 30, 2021. Eviction filings have likely increased this year and may continue to do so well after June 30th.

A special press conference is being held on Thursday, June 30th at 11:30am in front of the San Bernardino County Administrative Offices, 385 N. Arrowhead, San Bernardino, to “sound the alarm on a housing crisis that threatens to displace thousands of San Bernardino county residents“ says Pastor Samuel Casey, Executive Director, Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement (C.O.P.E). There are nearly 40 homeless agencies serving San Bernardino residents and who are working diligently to prevent homelessness but these agencies alone, may not be enough to address the scale of housing displacement we predict in the coming months. “Housing is an issue that everyone should care about. Family members, who have been displaced, are couch surfing and staying with loved ones longer than expected because there is a real shortage of affordable housing. Everyone is affected but those most impacted are often not the ones weighing in on and thinking with city leaders on housing solutions,” says Sonya Gray-Hunn, San Bernardino resident and Housing Justice Organizer with COPE.

COPE along with advocacy groups - Housing Now! California, a statewide coalition of over 150 organizations and the Inland Regional Housing Justice Coalition (IRHJC), a local coalition of community based organizations, insist that more can and should be done to address housing and mass displacement as both a human rights issue and a public health priority. “What we thought was previously impossible to keep people housed during the pandemic became possible. If we

¹ <https://www.urbandisplacement.org/maps/california-estimated-displacement-risk-model/>

did it then, we can do it now,” says Christian Flores, Organizer with Inland Congregations United for Change (ICUC).

“The housing crisis must be fought on multiple fronts. We must keep renters protected while also pushing for the production of new housing – and housing that is affordable and accessible to people of varying income levels,” says Francisco Duenas, Housing NOW! California. “We are supporting legislation to fast track affordable housing production while opposing other bills like Senate Bill 1133 that, if passed, will remove protections from rent gouging during an emergency, when they are needed most.”

The press conference is a call to action directed at multiple city and county stakeholders. “We are calling on people to [join the movement](#) and the fight for housing justice. Leticia Sutton, a COPE member and San Bernardino city resident says, “It bothers me that only a few people from my community are speaking up about this especially when I know that so many people are experiencing eviction. COPE is urging its own network to join a growing base of Black churches using their land for affordable housing production². State legislation like Senate Bill 1336, if passed, will streamline processes for religious organizations as well as nonprofit colleges to develop affordable housing on their property regardless of local zoning restrictions. Advocates are calling on state and local elected leaders to help fast track and incentivize housing development projects including alternative housing models and to Commit to and coordinate institute policies to “do no further harm” to displaced families forced to live in vehicles as a last resort to minimize family disruption as well as vehicle ticketing and towing.

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Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement (COPE) is a 501c3 organization with a mission to build the capacity of faith and community leaders to revitalize the communities in which they live, work, and worship.

Inland Regional Housing Coalition is a coalition of organizations based in San Bernardino and Riverside County working to advance housing justice in the region.

Housing NOW! California is a broad and diverse power building movement to make housing affordable and to combat the displacement crisis that is disproportionately impacting working class communities of color.

²<https://www.washingtonpost.com/religion/2022/02/25/houses-faith-are-building-affordable-housing-their-properties/>