
Local Government Committee

HB 1903

Brief Description: Concerning relocation assistance for low-income tenants.

Sponsors: Representatives Romero, Jarrett, Upthegrove, Edwards, Hunt and Moeller.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes authority under the Landlord Tenant Act for local governments to charge an owner for housing relocation assistance for low-income tenants who are dislocated as a result of code violations.
- Authorizes local governments to charge an owner of an "unfit" dwelling relocation assistance for low-income tenants who are prevented from occupying the dwelling.

Hearing Date: 2/24/03

Staff: Amy Wood (786-7127).

Background:

Landlord Tenant Act/Relocation Assistance for Low-Income Tenants

Counties and cities required to plan under the Growth Management Act may require housing relocation assistance from property owners for low-income persons who are dislocated from an assisted housing development. A local government may require property owners to provide relocation assistance to low-income tenants upon the demolition, substantial rehabilitation (whether due to code enforcement or other reason), change of use, or removal of use restrictions in an assisted housing development.

An "assisted housing development" means a multi-family rental housing development that receives federal, state, or local government assistance and is subject to use restrictions. The total relocation assistance may not exceed \$2,000 per household with the property owner paying not more than one half of the housing relocation.

Unfit Dwellings, Building, and Structures

A local government is authorized to address unfit dwellings, buildings, structures, and

premises within its jurisdiction. The local governing body is authorized to establish an improvement board or officer by passing an ordinance. The ordinance must describe the standards to be applied in defining a building or structure unfit, and in authorizing the board or officer to take action.

Once a building is identified as unfit, a notice must be sent to all listed owners advising them of an administrative hearing. If no appeal is filed or the appeal results in a classification of unfit, the owners are ordered to repair, vacate, or demolish the structure. The officer or the board may repair or demolish the structure if the owner does not accomplish it in a reasonable amount of time. The costs are assessed to the property.

Summary of Bill:

Landlord Tenant Act/Relocation Assistance for Low-Income Tenants

A local government may not require property owners to provide relocation assistance to low-income tenants if a tenant is forced to relocate because of code violations.

Unfit Dwellings, Building, and Structures

A local government may require payment by the owner of an "unfit" dwelling for "rental relocation allowance" for low-income tenants who are prevented from using or occupying the dwelling, building, or structure by an order of the municipality issued during the course of enforcing the code.

The total relocation assistance may not exceed \$2,000 per dwelling unit. A local government may provide a deadline by which relocation assistance must be paid, a per diem monetary penalty for each day relocation is late, and for attorney's fees and costs associated with having to bring an action to enforce the provisions of the ordinance.

In addition, if a property owner fails to pay relocation assistance by the deadline required by an order, the obligation of the property owner becomes an obligation of the officers, directors, manager, and managing partner of any corporation, limited liability corporation, or limited liability partnership. This provision does not apply to any officers, directors, managers, or managing partners who do not participate in the management of the property but only hold an ownership interest to protect a security interest in the property.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.