General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Mayor and City Council Persons:

I question your presumption that the RSO is necessary.

1. Recent surges in rents correspond to increases in housing costs overall, including single family homes - not to mention food, gas, restaurants, etc. Are you going to institute Price Stabilization for restaurant meals?

2. Since June 2020 median cost of a single family home on the south coast has increased from $1,375,000 to $2,075,000 or 50%. Are you going to put price controls on single family homes? Say, 2% increase per year from original purchase price? That would be easy enough to calculate as the assessor has already done that for you.

3. The only “facts” I have seen before the City Council have quoted market rate rents, as if that is the rate all landlords are currently charging their tenants. That is absolutely not true but you have done nothing to ascertain the true level of rents in Santa Barbara. Since a significant number of landlords did not practice regular rental increases their rents have become substantially below market rents. They have been, effectively, private charities. If you must “stabilize rents” why don’t you stabilize rents that are at market and exempt rental rates that are below market? Let’s not practice punishing good deeds.

4. 850 apartments approved in past 3 years with potentially seven thousand more to be built in coming years. Demand from unauthorized immigrants, which pushed up rental housing costs by 20% from 2021 to 2024 according to the Federal Reserve, has stopped as the border has been effectively closed and millions are being removed. Why is this ordinance necessary? I submit, it is not.

Best regards.

Ed Fuller

Stabilize a community with zoning. Establish housing subsidies when funds are available. But never intrude into the very interior of private property with arbitrary rent control imposed from outside. That is a bridge too far.

J. Livingston

Dear Members of the City Council,

I am writing to oppose the proposed rent stabilization ordinance, and to ask the Council to at least exempt owner-occupied properties like ours from its provisions. My husband and I bought our first home just a few years ago - the duplex we had rented for three years before finally getting the chance to buy it during the pandemic.

Despite the rhetoric of the ordinance's advocates, we are not wealthy landlords, we are not a private equity firm, and we are not "greedy slumlords." My husband is an environmental scientist. I am an artist. We are a couple in our thirties who rented one half of our duplex for three years before we finally got the chance to buy it during the pandemic. When the previous owners put the house on the market, we saw an opportunity to finally become first time homeowners by renting out the other unit to help us afford the mortgage.

Because we live here too, we take extra pride in that unit. We have ALWAYS gone above and beyond to keep it in great condition, because our tenant isn't a line item to us - they're our neighbor. This is exactly the kind of small-scale, owner-occupied rental housing that a healthy city needs more of, not less. But because of the astronomical increases in costs in recent years, particularly homeowner’s insurance, this policy threatens our ability to remain homeowners and will also push out others like us.

1. This ordinance would close off one of the few realistic paths to homeownership for first-time buyers like us, and would shrink the rental supply.

We could only afford our mortgage because we could rent out an extra unit. That rental income was not a bonus - it was the difference between being able to become first-time buyers or remain stuck in the rental market. This is one of the only paths left for a middle-income couple to buy a home in this city. If this ordinance caps rental income growth while layering on new compliance obligations for small landlords like us, it makes renting out that space uneconomical and a legal liability.

The likely outcome is that these units stop being rented. A buyer who doesn't need rental income to qualify for a mortgage, and who doesn't want the liability of being subject to a rent board and registry, will simply keep the space for themselves. This ordinance would raise the bar for other first time home buyers, while shrinking the number of rental units available to renters in Santa Barbara - the exact opposite of what Santa Barbara's housing goals claim to achieve.

2. A rental income cap ignores the real, rapidly rising cost of simply owning our home.

Over the past three years, our homeowners insurance premium has increased by **over 300%**. Southern California Edison electricity rates rose over 10% last year alone. Between insurance, utilities, property taxes, and maintenance, our total ownership costs have grown by an average of ***9% annually***.

If our costs keep rising at 9% a year while rental income is capped below 3%, the math eventually stops working. At that point, we, like others, will be forced to sell. Given the current cost of entry into the Santa Barbara market, the buyer who replaces us is far more likely to be someone who doesn't need or want rental income at all. The unit comes off the rental market entirely. A policy meant to protect renters ends up producing fewer rental units and fewer pathways to ownership.

3. This is not speculation. It is what happened in San Francisco.

This effect is well documented. A study by Stanford economists Rebecca Diamond, Tim McQuade, and Franklin Qian, published in the *American Economic Review* (2019), examined San Francisco's 1994 expansion of rent control to small multi-unit buildings. They found that the rent control policy reduced the rental housing supply by 15%, as a result of owners converting units to condominiums or moving in as owner-occupants to escape the regulatory liability and upside economics of renting. The authors concluded that while rent control benefited existing tenants who stayed in place, it reduced overall housing affordability, accelerated gentrification, and shifted the composition of the neighborhood toward higher-income residents.

Santa Barbara should learn from this evidence rather than repeat it. A policy that looks protective on paper produced fewer rental units, higher market rents, and a more affluent city in practice.

Conclusion

I share the Council's goal of housing stability and affordability for renters - we were renters ourselves not long ago, and absolutely support efforts to reduce housing costs for renters and buyers. But this ordinance, as proposed, would work against that goal.

I urge the Council to reconsider this approach, or at minimum to exempt owner-occupied properties with accessory rental units, which function very differently from investor-owned housing and are disproportionately harmed by across-the-board caps.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Laura Wells

Source: Diamond, Rebecca, Tim McQuade, and Franklin Qian. 2019. "The Effects of Rent Control Expansion on Tenants, Landlords, and Inequality: Evidence from San Francisco." American Economic Review 109(9): 3365–94.

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

To Whom it May Concern:

Having been born and raised in Santa Barbara and having watched my parents work as hard as they did to provide a safe place to raise their family, I consider myself extremely fortunate. After having left yet only to return to this community to care first for my mother and then my father, I have spent the last 20 years watching tremendous changes in this town, some good and some very concerning. But, it was always home, and I finally saved enough money to purchase my own home here. Being middle aged and disabled, I am facing a future of potentially having to sell what I believed was my "forever home" and leave this community as the restrictions placed through the above-mentioned ordinance might leave me with no other options. I firmly believe that homeowners should have the right to rent their properties, should they choose to do so, and at a cost pursuant to the ever fluctuating real estate market and economy. Having the City impose such strict restrictions on homeowners wanting to rent their properties, some out of necessity simply to keep up with the ever-rising costs associated with rising taxes, added expensive Bonds, as well as a fee to the City itself simply to monitor all rentals seems unjust. All this is being proposed while not upgrading the current infrastructure needed to maintain our existing population simply seems like an unfair burden placed upon property owners who have invested heavily in purchasing property.

Many people, such as my parents as well as myself, consider their homes as their largest asset. I can only envision the proposed Ordinance causing a decrease in those values and stripping away further property owner's rights. It is very unfortunate to allow our community to be so highly influenced by outside developers with their own agendas, while the real citizens of Santa Barbara mostly struggle to make ends meet. I am highly opposed to th proposed Rental Stabilization Ordinance.

Most sincerely,

Ann-Marie Cepkauskas

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed rental ordinances. I realize a full draft is not yet available, However, I feel I must express my deep concerns.

I have owned a triplex home downtown since 1988. I bought it as a way to afford a home for myself and my 3 children. I am a single mother. My house is an old Victorian house that most of you probably know. It was built in 1905. Over the years I have had to do major renovations and repairs to this house to keep it in good shape and also as a labor of love. I have always kept my rents low and on average only increase them when absolutely needed.

The rent control guidelines look to stop any rental increase greater than 60% of CPI which currently would be 3% and possibly less in some years.

In order to keep my house in good shape and fix problems as they come up, I spend more than 3%. Plumbers earn $100 or more per hour. Electricians $120 or more per hour. My water bill increases every year. I am sure this will continue.

Home insurance (especially for a multi-unit and the age of my house) has doubled in the couple of years. Property tax alone increases by 1% every year for all properties.

I am devoted to Santa Barbara. I worked for the County of Santa Barbara over 10 years. I worked in the non-profit sector for 15 years, including homeless services. The proposed rent control ordinances are not a viable solution. The threat of rent control is decreasing property values and less people will want to have rental properties. Many owners of rental properties are converting their units to condos or single-family homes. I have considered this myself. Your actions will decrease rentals in SB.

In addition; I am disturbed that The Santa Barbara City Council voted to appropriate up to $400,000 from the city's flexible housing and homelessness fund to pay the legal fees for the ongoing federal lawsuit challenging its Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO) and temporary rent freeze. This is taking funds from low income and housing services where it is most needed.

Bottom line; 3% rental increase is not sustainable to maintain a property. The state constitution and California Tenant Protection Act (AB 1482), notes that landlords are entitled to a “fair rate of return” and provides a procedure to request consideration. The proposed rent controls are not good for our community, potential tenants of property values that impact city revenues.

Please reconsider the current proposals.

Thank you.

Nancy Gottlieb

Santa Barbara City Council Members:

The proposed ordinance amounts to a ***government taking of rights*** that belong to private property owners.

At a time when the City is being challenged to reduce unnecessary spending, it is difficult to understand why the Council is pursuing policies that will ultimately increase costs. Public funds are not unlimited, and every new regulation carries administrative, legal, and financial consequences. Good governance requires thoughtful decision-making that considers both intended and unintended impacts. The question should be: What serves the greatest good for the entire community, and who will ultimately bear these costs?

Property owners invest their own resources to purchase, maintain, and improve housing that serves residents and businesses throughout the city. They also support their families and employees through these investments. This relationship benefits the community as a whole. We property owners often incur costs due to poor judgement and lack of responsible living by tenants and their invitees. This ordinance makes the property owners responsible for the damages done by irresponsible tenants, without benefit of recompensation. Ultimately, many properties will fall into disrepair and neglect due to financial strains imposed upon the property owners.

The proposed ordinance effectively freezes rental income while the City's own costs continue to rise. Property owners continue to face increasing property taxes, insurance premiums, utility costs, maintenance expenses, and regulatory fees. Meanwhile, the City continues to expand spending. Too often, taxpayer dollars are used to commission reports that duplicate previous work rather than implementing meaningful solutions. The repeated studies concerning State Street are just one example.

History has shown that rent control does not achieve its intended goals. Cities across the country have demonstrated that rent control discourages investment, reduces housing production, and often leads to deterioration of existing housing stock. Housing markets function best when supply can respond to demand. The real solution to affordability is increasing the housing supply—not discouraging those who provide it.

Unfortunately, the City's current regulatory climate makes it increasingly difficult to build quality housing. Developers have little incentive to construct new projects when faced with excessive restrictions, escalating costs, and uncertainty. The result is often smaller, lower-quality units that are less suitable for families and working residents.

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

Santa Barbara has long been admired for its beauty, character, and quality of life. Those qualities are gradually being diminished. Inclusionary housing is an important goal, but it deserves better planning and better outcomes. Instead, the City is approving developments that resemble dense urban projects found in downtown Los Angeles or New York—approximately 400-square-foot units with little or no private outdoor space, limited parking, and inadequate bicycle storage, where residents are expected to hang bicycles in hallways. The recently constructed five-story building on De La Guerra Street is one example.

Is this truly the vision for Santa Barbara? Who will choose to live in these conditions, and what kind of community are we creating for future generations?

I respectfully urge the Council to reconsider this ordinance and pursue policies that encourage housing production, protect private property rights, and preserve the unique character that has made Santa Barbara an exceptional place to live and work.

Please remember, the more units available for rent, the lower rents will be as property owners will have to drop their prices to compete.

Thank you for being thoughtful and prudent.

Cyndee Howard

Santa Barbara Resident

Housing Provider

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Subject: The Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance Creates Serious Legal and Financial Exposure for the City

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

I urge the City Council to immediately halt its rush toward adopting the draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance. This measure would affect an unconstitutional taking of private property by forcing owners of pre-1995 rental housing to subsidize a narrow group of tenants who have not demonstrated any financial need. It is punitive, arbitrary, and certain to produce fewer housing options, higher rents on non-exempt properties, intensified tenant-landlord conflict, expanded city bureaucracy, and costly litigation in both state and federal courts.

Councilmember Meagan Harmon stated during the October 14, 2025 City Council meeting:

"I actually do think that there is a way to do this better than simply how it is done everywhere else, which seems to be what was suggested to us with this ordinance. We do all of us such a disservice when we approach a policy as impactful as this with anything less than all of our creative legislative energy. I do think we can do better to protect good tenants and to protect good landlords."

This ordinance does not meet that standard. It is a cut-and-paste of rent-control schemes already operating in other California jurisdictions — many of which are already confronting the same constitutional challenges.

The proposed annual rent cap — 60% of CPI or 3%, whichever is lower — systematically limits increases below the rate of inflation and below what is required for a fair and reasonable return on investment. When government regulation prevents property owners from earning a constitutionally adequate return on their property, it constitutes a taking under the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments.

The landlords of Santa Barbara did not create the housing crisis — they inherited it. For decades, past City Councils erected every possible roadblock to new development, from water restrictions and parking requirements to environmental hurdles and inadequate infrastructure planning. This is a crisis decades in the making. This ill-conceived ordinance is yet another gimmick in the long line of failed government policies whose authors are no longer in office to be held accountable.

When a court ultimately rules that this or similar ordinances are an unconstitutional taking, the City will face enormous financial liability. There is currently at least one federal lawsuit already challenging the City's temporary rent freeze, and a second — and possibly a third —

lawsuit is in the works. In addition, there is a strong likelihood of a ballot initiative and referendum effort. It will only take one jurisdiction in California to overstep the constitutional threshold for this ordinance — and dozens of similar rent control measures across the state — to be struck down by the courts. There are already a number of these cases working their way through the legal system. The battle to preserve property rights is just beginning.

On top of these direct legal costs, the City will be forced to redirect millions of dollars away from programs that serve the poor, law enforcement, fire protection, parks and recreation, and other essential services — all because this City Council has chosen to place the well-being of Santa Barbara on a regulatory scheme that has never been documented to produce better housing, more affordable housing, or a better city in which to live.

This risk is especially dangerous given the City's already precarious financial condition. During last month's budget deliberations, the City confronted a significant shortfall after depleting its contingency reserves and operating well below its adopted reserve targets. At the same time, Councilmember Santamaria proposed freezing the hiring of three vacant police officer positions to save approximately $576,000, underscoring the difficult necessity of considering reductions in law enforcement staffing.

Before taking any further action, the Council should publicly account for the full scope of this proposal, including the projected compensation exposure, litigation costs, and the inevitable redirection of millions of dollars from essential public services.

Santa Barbara should pursue real solutions to housing affordability through increased supply, streamlined permitting, and targeted public subsidies — not by imposing an unconstitutional burden on private property owners while already struggling to maintain basic fiscal stability and core city services. I strongly recommend the Council reject this draft ordinance.

Don Katich

40+ year resident of Santa Barbara

Tenant/Homeowner/Housing Provider

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Re: Proposed Rent Stabilization Ordinance

I am Michael L. Smith, a Santa Barbara resident and a Calif Licenses Real Estate Broker & Certified Real Estate Manager since 1980.

What I know from my long experience as a property
manager is that this well-intentioned ordinance will harm the tenants it is supposed to help, as well as local property owners and our local economy.

In my view, the following items will hard our real estate industry:

1. **The quality of tenant housing will decline.** Property owners
restricted from increasing rents to meet rising costs such as property tax, insurance, maintenance, and utilities will not be able to afford property upkeep, leading to deferred maintenance and a decline in the quality of housing for tenants.

2. **There will be fewer rental units available**. Developers will be less likely to build unprofitable housing, and local mom-and-pop landlords will be forced to take their units off the market resulting in fewer available rental units locally.

3. **Rent control creates a "frozen" market**, where existing tenants in controlled units (even those who have a higher income and do not need assistance) are incentivized to stay indefinitely, reducing turnover and making it harder for new lower income residents to find housing.
In addition to harming the tenants it is intended to help, this ordinance will also harm small local property owners, causing their properties to lose value and no longer be viable as an investment.

The ordinance will also harm our city's economy. As rent caps negatively affect the value of existing rental properties, property tax revenue will decrease, affecting local city services. Additionally, the massive bureaucracy needed to oversee registration and enforcement will cost the city of Santa Barbara millions annually and harm all residents.

I urge the City Council not to rush into making this extremely restrictive ordinance permanent, but to take the time to listen to all stakeholders and craft a more sophisticated, balanced and effective approach to solving our housing problems and helping tenants and all of our citizens.

Sincerely,

Michael L. Smith

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Hello,

I am writing to express my concerns about the current draft rent stabilization ordinance that the city of SB is considering. This ordinance as written is a rushed blanket response that will severely impact landlords very differently depending on the size of their business, the age of their units, and most importantly the affordability of their rents. Landlords who have long term tenants with below market or affordable rents will be more severely punished by being locked in at those lower than market value rents than say landlords with properties that are newer, require less maintenance, have turned over more recently and have market or above rents. My parents have had rentals in Santa Barbara as a family business for over 60 years and always offered lower rents and housing for nearly all long term tenants. Since my father passed away and can no longer provide the maintenance work on the rentals my mother now needs to hire workers to help with repairs. This has increased her costs dramatically and an ordinance like this which doesn't take factors like costs related to rent rates into consideration will negatively impact her way more than large business landlords with higher rents that are already based on things like current market value and high maintenance costs. I agree housing costs are an issue in our city, but this needs to be addressed in a way that takes into consideration the diverse landlords and situations that are currently part of the market. There should be a provision to assess the current status of rental contracts compared to market value before prices are automatically locked in.

Thank you for your consideration,

Cricket Wood

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
AB 1482 Debacle Feedback:

My attorney said I need to talk to the lawmakers that made the law. I tried and they said "Stay close to your attorney". I never charged enough for an attorney. Shows how out of touch and uncaring the staff is.

I have always charged way under market for my 2 acre parcel. Also the tenant did repair work in exchange but those details are not delineated for 1482. My tenant rents 2 acres and stores 4 boats and a camper. For 3 bedrooms he pays $2,820. The address is 5815 W. Camino Cielo. As you know this is a travesty for Santa Barbara. A small house down the street with much less land and a single car garage is renting for $4,500 and has a secondary unit.

If this law was made for lower income tenant , it definitely is not for me. My tenant who has rented for 21 years had his rent raised 4 times. He just got back from 3 months in the Phillipines, and just bought a new Harley (slap in the face) and has a big fishing boat newly refurbished with a hot tub.

What is remarkable is the he is an abusive bully that does whatever he want to the property, he is contrary to work with and causes trouble to any worker that comes on the property. He cut down highly protected oak trees to grow pot. I don't want him in my life and California is forcing me to retain this nemesis. TO boot he expects me to pay $ 133/ day if SCE shuts off power. He also complains about the Pass being closed often and being burned up at night in a fire. At this point he knows where he can move but chooses to take advantage of me

I can't make this arrangement work. There is no money to pay an attorney and 3 months rent relocation fee

I am 74 years old and have an autoimmune Disease and can not take the stress , financial, or abusive interactions from the tenant. He is a bit unbalanced and has always given a hard time to the workers I would have there like not allowing the SCE to inspect the trees around the poles, or let the worker reline the water tank etc. Very undesirable to be forced to rent to such an undesirable.

This is an impossible hardship. Why are landlords saddled with the solution when it is the law of supply and demand, also inflations. WE did not create the problem and it is an insult to force this nightmare on me.

Kind Regards,

Teresa Seiler

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Santa Barbara City Council,

I hope this message finds you well. I am a lifelong community member who cares deeply about the future of this beautiful city. I am writing to express my concerns regarding the current rent freeze and the proposed limitations on rental increases, along with the establishment of a monitored rental registry. These measures are not only costing our city valuable time and resources, but they are also contributing to a growing divide between tenants and landlords, straining the already delicate relationship between property owners and city agencies.

The core issue we are facing is not merely the rental prices, but the urgent need for adequate housing to support our hardworking local workforce. It is imperative that we focus on the quantity and quality of rental units available, rather than getting bogged down by the pricing debate.

Furthermore, the city council appears to be allocating funds towards plans and new departments that may not directly address our pressing housing issues. Instead, I urge you to consider collaborating with property owners and developers to create smart, effective solutions that can mitigate our housing crisis.

If these policies continue, they may backfire, resulting in an overall increase in rents and allowing properties to deteriorate over time. Many "mom and pop" owners could be forced to sell their properties at discounted prices, jeopardizing the availability of future rental units and further exacerbating the situation.

It is essential that we find a balance that supports both tenants and landlords, fostering a collaborative approach to ensure our community thrives.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this critical issue. I look forward to your response and to exploring viable solutions together.

Sincerely,

Todd Eliassen

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Santa Barbara City Council,

My name is Alex Gudenau and I've been renting in Santa Barbara for the past seven years. Like many people here, I know firsthand how expensive it is to live in this city, and I understand why the Council wants to help renters. I appreciate that goal. At the same time, I'm worried that this proposed ordinance could end up creating new problems instead of solving the ones we already have.

One thing that concerns me is the condition of rental housing over time. The cost of owning and maintaining property keeps going up, from insurance and taxes to repairs and regular upkeep. If property owners can't keep up with those costs, I'm concerned that maintenance will get delayed and renters like me will end up living in homes that aren't as well cared for.

I'm also worried about what this could mean for the number of rental homes available. Santa Barbara already has a serious housing shortage. If this ordinance makes it less practical to own or build rental housing, I think we'll see even fewer rentals on the market. That doesn't help people who are trying to find a place to live.

Another concern is that rent-controlled units often don't become available very often because people naturally stay where their rent is lower, even if their financial situation improves. I don't blame anyone for doing that—I probably would too—but it also means there are fewer opportunities for other renters, especially young people, families, and workers trying to move into the community.

I also hope the Council carefully considers the cost of creating and running a permanent rent control program. It seems like it would require a lot of oversight and funding, and I wonder if those resources could be better spent on solutions that increase the supply of housing and make it easier for more people to find affordable places to live.

As a renter, I want affordable housing just as much as anyone else. I simply believe we need solutions that address the root of the problem without reducing housing quality or making rental homes even harder to find.

I respectfully ask you to take more time before making this ordinance permanent. Please continue listening to renters, property owners, housing experts, and others in our community so that whatever decision is made truly benefits Santa Barbara in the long run.

Thank you for your time and for considering my perspective.

Sincerely, Alex Gudenau
Santa Barbara Resident and Renter

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Hello-

I am writing to express my concern about the proposed Rent Stabilization Ordinance. My family has run a small rental business in Santa Barbara since the late 1970s. My parents' rental properties are priced under market and they have spent their lives repairing, improving and providing homes for families in Santa Barbara via their rental business.

In recent years their business has been challenging with the cost of repairs and insurance increasing steeply and my parents aging, thus requiring us to hire outside contractors at a high cost. When I see the work they have done and consider the finances, even without this ordinance it is difficult to see how the business makes sense. And now with the proposed ordinance, their business makes even less sense.

It is difficult to imagine any future for our family business and this will be true for others who provide rentals in SB. As a consequence this ordinance has a high likelihood of reducing the amount of rental inventory in Santa Barbara, as our only choice would be to sell family housing that is currently being rented at reasonable rates. New buyers will be buying at modern costs and the rents they would charge will be insanely higher.

This ordinance is lengthy, complex and carries a heavy cost to implement. It indiscriminately limits rent increases with no attention to whether those rental prices were already low. If Santa Barbara wants to invest in housing, it should do just that, not create additional expensive bureaucracies to regulate the housing market with overly complex rules that punish small family run operations the same as large developer businesses.

Please reconsider the implications of this ordinance. It is not solving a problem, it is creating new ones.

-Zoë Wood

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Santa Barbara City Council,

I am writing as a Santa Barbara resident and renter of more than nine years. I care deeply about keeping housing affordable and ensuring that renters like me have stable, quality places to live. While I understand that the proposed rent stabilization ordinance is intended to help tenants, I am concerned that it could ultimately make our housing challenges worse rather than better. My biggest concern is that the quality of rental housing may decline over time. Property owners still face increasing costs such as insurance, property taxes, maintenance, repairs, and utilities. If they are unable to keep pace with those rising expenses, many may delay needed maintenance or improvements, leaving tenants to live in housing that gradually deteriorates.

I am also concerned that this ordinance could reduce the number of rental homes available in Santa Barbara. If building or operating rental housing becomes less financially sustainable, fewer new rental units may be developed, and some smaller property owners may choose to sell or remove their rental units from the market. At a time when our community desperately needs more housing, I worry this could make it even harder for renters to find a place to live.

Another concern is that strict rent controls can reduce turnover. Tenants in rent-controlled units, regardless of whether they still need the financial assistance, have a strong incentive to remain in place indefinitely. While this provides stability for those tenants, it can also make it much more difficult for newcomers, young families, workers, and lower-income residents to find available housing.

As a renter, I want policies that provide meaningful relief without creating unintended consequences that reduce housing quality or availability. I also worry about the potential cost of creating and maintaining the bureaucracy needed to administer and enforce this ordinance. Those costs ultimately affect all Santa Barbara residents.

I respectfully urge the City Council not to rush into making this ordinance permanent. Instead, I encourage you to take the time to hear from renters, property owners, housing providers, economists, and other stakeholders to develop a balanced approach that addresses affordability while encouraging investment in quality housing and increasing the overall supply of rental homes.

Thank you for your time, your service to our community, and your thoughtful consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

Sarah Lopez, Santa Barbara Resident and Renter of More Than Nine Years

I am writing in objection to the RSO, as it seems at its most basic point dishonest and punitive.

For the city council to say they will hold increases to 3% or lower is hypocritical to say the least considering that:

- recent wildfire assessment for the Mesa allows up to 4% money the city gets

- city council raised rates on water and trash in the area of 40% a few years ago following raises in the preceding years.

- comments like Councilmemembers Santa Maria a leasing proponent that landlords can get loans to make repairs (as though it's super easy to do that which shows she has no understanding of what she is talking about financially and let's consider what interest rates are.)

- city council is aware of skyrocketing costs of insurance and cancellation of many policies, again their max raises doesn't work with actual inflation and costs of materials, workers, etc.

- rental registry adds more costs.

There a quite a few unintended possible consequences, the properties that will be impacted are older not newer. This will impact the overall quality of housing stock, neighborhoods, etc. when landlords don't reinvest it also affects trades and other businesses as less $ put into local community.

The high cost of setting up and administering it as well as potential lawsuits that could be filed against the city in a time when its leaders can't seem to get a handle on its own finances.

I would ask it not pass in its current form and caps.

Michel Brewer

Resident City of SB

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Mayor Rowse, Councilmembers, and City Staff,

I appreciate the City's efforts to protect renters and address Santa Barbara's housing challenges. Strong enforcement of existing tenant protections and targeted action against abusive practices are important goals that I support. At the same time, I am concerned that the proposed rent stabilization ordinance, as currently drafted, will have unintended consequences for rental markets, housing supply, and long-term investment in rental housing.

I am a Santa Barbara resident, an economist, and the owner of a single rental property, our former home, which is a duplex and represents our primary retirement asset. Retaining this property required significant financial tradeoffs, including forgoing other retirement savings opportunities, and we rely on it for our long-term financial security. I also spent many years as a renter, including in the City of San Francisco, which has a long-standing rent stabilization ordinance. Professionally, I spent six years analyzing inflation and three years evaluating rental markets.

While rent stabilization can benefit current tenants, economic research suggests that broad rent stabilization policies can also reduce housing supply, discourage reinvestment in older rental housing, increase administrative burdens, and contribute to higher rents for future tenants. The ordinance may also place significant financial strain on small housing providers, particularly those who purchased properties more recently and continue to face relatively high ownership costs, financing expenses, and other obligations associated with providing rental housing.

I am particularly concerned about the proposed annual general adjustment (AGA), which would limit allowable rent increases below the rate of inflation by design. During Council's discussion, it was suggested that because housing is only one component of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), only a fraction of CPI should be used to determine allowable rent increases. Respectfully, this interpretation does not align with how the index is designed to be used.

The CPI is designed to measure overall inflation across a broad basket of goods and services and is not intended to be selectively reduced based on the weighting of individual components. In my professional experience analyzing inflation for the federal government, if the policy goal is to track inflation, the full CPI is the appropriate benchmark. If the goal is to reflect housing-specific costs, then a housing-specific index would be more appropriate. The proposed adjustment of the lesser of 60 percent of CPI or 3 percent does not consistently track either general inflation or housing-specific cost pressures. Instead, it structurally sets allowable rent increases below general inflation.

Allowing annual rent adjustments to track inflation does not create a real rent increase; it simply preserves purchasing power as the costs of providing housing rise. By contrast, limiting annual adjustments below inflation gradually reduces the real value of rental income while insurance, maintenance, labor, property taxes, water, and electricity continue to increase. In our case, insurance for our duplex recently tripled, while the cost of water and electricity increased much faster than inflation. The ordinance also limits recovery of major capital improvements and creates a complex administrative process that may be especially burdensome for small housing providers.

I respectfully urge the Council to reconsider the ordinance as currently written, particularly the proposed annual adjustment of the lesser of 60 percent of CPI or 3 percent, and instead pursue a more targeted approach that strengthens enforcement of existing tenant protections while preserving incentives to maintain and invest in Santa Barbara's rental housing.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bronwyn Bradbury

City of Santa Barbara Resident

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Members of the City Council,

I am writing to share my concerns regarding the proposed rent stabilization and just cause eviction ordinances.

I recognize that some of you may have campaigned in support of these policies and that many of your constituents expect you to follow through on those commitments. However, I encourage you to consider not only the immediate impact of these measures but also their long-term economic consequences for our community.

While rent stabilization may provide short-term relief for some tenants, there is substantial evidence that these policies can produce unintended outcomes over time. Economist Peter Rupert of UCSB has presented research to the Council on multiple occasions demonstrating how strict rent controls can discourage investment in rental housing and reduce incentives for property owners to maintain and improve their buildings. Ultimately, the very tenants these policies are intended to help may experience declining housing quality.

Property owners face rising costs every year, including property taxes, insurance premiums, utilities, maintenance, and repairs. Many also continue to make substantial mortgage payments. The perception that all landlords have unlimited financial resources simply does not reflect reality. Many are individuals or families who rely on rental income to meet these growing obligations.

As you consider these ordinances, I ask you to think about what happens when a landlord no longer has sufficient rental income to cover both operating expenses and unexpected repairs. When a plumbing system fails or a roof begins to leak, where will the funding come from? A landlord's first obligation is to pay the mortgage, property taxes, and insurance to avoid foreclosure or the loss of the property. If those essential expenses consume the available income, necessary maintenance may be delayed, resulting in deteriorating living conditions for tenants. I hope the Council carefully considers these practical consequences before adopting policies that could unintentionally create them.

I would also like to raise another point. As a lifelong Santa Barbara resident, I have seen previous rent control proposals presented to the community. Historically, measures of this significance have been decided by the voters rather than by a vote of seven Council members. I respectfully ask why this issue is being handled differently.

I understand that many of you have already formed your opinions, and I recognize that one additional letter may not influence your decision. Nevertheless, I felt it was important to respectfully share my perspective and encourage you to weigh the long-term implications of these proposals for both tenants and housing providers.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you would like to discuss my comments further, I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you. My phone number is listed below.

Sincerely,

Gregg Leach

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
To: Santa Barbara City Council
Re: Proposed Rent Stabilization Ordinance

I am writing as a 50+ year resident of Santa Barbara, a 40+ year IREM certified property manager and real estate broker, and a Santa Barbara property owner. What I know from my long experience as a property manager is that this well-intentioned ordinance will harm the tenants it is supposed to help, as well as local property owners and our local economy, for the following reasons:

1. **The quality of tenant housing will decline.** Property owners restricted from increasing rents to meet rising costs such as property tax, insurance, maintenance, and utilities will not be able to afford property upkeep, leading to deferred maintenance and a decline in the quality of housing for tenants.
2. **There will be fewer rental units available**. Developers will be less likely to build unprofitable housing, and local mom-and-pop landlords will be forced to take their units off the market resulting in fewer available rental units locally.
3. **Rent control creates a "frozen" market**, where existing tenants in controlled units (even those who have a higher income and do not need assistance) are incentivized to stay indefinitely, reducing turnover and making it harder for new lower income residents to find housing.

In addition to harming the tenants it is intended to help, this ordinance will also harm small local property owners, causing their properties to lose value and no longer be viable as an investment.

The ordinance will also harm our city's economy. As rent caps negatively affect the value of existing rental properties, property tax revenue will decrease, affecting local city services. Additionally, the massive bureaucracy needed to oversee registration and enforcement will cost the city of Santa Barbara millions annually and harm all residents.

I urge the City Council not to rush into making this extremely restrictive ordinance permanent, but to take the time to listen to all stakeholders and craft a more sophisticated, balanced and effective approach to solving our housing problems and helping tenants and all of our citizens.

Sincerely,

Ron Lopez

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
To the City Of Santa Barbara Housing Team, and the SB City Council

I emphatically object to rent control and Housing restrictions on owners trying to rent their properties in Santa Barbara and all of the nearby communities this might affect.

I have been actively managing all aspects of our 19 unit property in Carpinteria Ca for 40 years,

and I can tell you from doing the leasing that the market is just fine in providing restricted rents and do we owners do not need any government interference in providing housing to potential or existing renters.

Capitalism works effectively in restricting rents based on the supply and demand by renters. If there are no qualified renters to rent at a price, we automatically reduce the asking price, of course!

We already give existing good tenants rent concessions regularly to keep good tenants in place. Why would anyone want to lose a good paying tenant?

If there are no qualified renters available who can afford a rental, the price goes down automatically, and gets quickly discounted to fit the market.

And you will be punishing owners who have given rent concessions to good renters for years, because we did not raise their rents, wanting to maintain a good tenant at their affordability level.

So if you put rent control into effect, we owners will calculate that we must not allow good long term tenants any concessions, because otherwise we will be limited in future rent increases, and so this hurts long term renters,

exactly what you do not want!

And the operating costs continue to increase, especially water and repairs, taxes, labor, and supplies.

Would you like to see Santa Monica type problems in Santa Barbara, where offensive criminals can live in rent controlled apartments forever, and cause unlimited misery to their neighbor tenants?

and can not be gotten rid of, even though they are disturbing the peace with drug and alcohal abuse, and even guns and theft, and shooting out property lights and and prying out coin boxers in the laundry room, not to mention raping neighbor tenants.? It's truly a nightmare. I have first hand experience owning Santa Monica property.

We owners can't even sell the property now because no one wants to own and work hard to maintain a property that has no profit incentive or work hours compensation, andi s nothing but headaches and heartbreak.

Is that what you want for Santa Barbara?

Please do NOT impose rent and other restrictions on rental property. The market takes care of this very well on its own.

Thank you for reading this and knowing this is from a property owner who has worked for the last 40 years actively doing every aspect of property management, including renting, advertising and paying all repair bills, as well as offering apartments in excellent condition when tenants move in.

You would be far better at accomplishing better rental rates if you could get Property Insurance rates down and controlled, as well as spending your energy getting health care insurance reduced and controlled, so tenants had a better cash flow and owners did not pay the huge gigantic increased property Insurance costs today.

as well as controlling the gigantic costs of water, gas and all utilities expenses on our properties.

Thank you for listening to me. I have been renting apartments for 40 years and I know what i am saying is 100% true.

You need ther experience to make these judgements.

Adrea Caren

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
I ask that certain city council members reconsider their stance on the proposed rent stabilization ordinance.

This ordinance will lower the supply and availability of rental housing throughout the city.

This ordinance encourages small landlords to sell to large developers who will destroy our cute and humble duplexes/triplexes that were built before 1995 and replace them with luxurious single-family homes or large multi-story developments with higher rents.

This ordinance will lead to more derelict rental properties; affecting tenants, neighbors, and homeowners.

The current ordinance "applies to all residential rental units in the City **except**: 1. Rental units for which a certificate of occupancy was issued (or final inspection on a building permit application for **construction of the unit was completed) on or after February 1, 1995** 2. Rental units that are **alienable separate from title to any other dwelling unit** or are a subdivided interest in a subdivision"

You are discouraging the building of ADUs on properties that are currently single family homes. A property owner will not build an ADU if it then forces them into all of the stipulations of this ordinance.

Some owners of multi-unit properties built before 1995 are going to sell their properties to developers who will remove the tenants, re-build, and set new rents much higher than they were before the owner sold.

This Ordinance will not create the results you think it will. This is a bad idea for renters, landlords, home-owners, and the city as a whole.

Sincerely,

Alex Harrison

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

I support the need for fair rents but am appalled at the "one size fits all" approach the City of Santa Barbara has taken in addressing this very serious issue.

As a small property owner and Santa Barbara native I feel completely ignored. I have been put in the same category as professional property/business owners and corporations.

My rental properties are modest, well maintained. My rents are well below the average and I have had the same tenants for decades. I have great flexibility in adjusting my rents when my tenants require it.

The city continues to increase all city service fees. The
utility companies, insurance companies and the county tax assessor all increase their fees annually. The cost of maintaining safe living units has also skyrocketed. The maximum annual rent increase allowed by this ordinance does not begin to cover all these increased costs.

I do not support the way these ordinances are written including the implications of landlords vs tenants, the financial threats directed toward property owners, the mandated disclosure of information already given to the city and county and additional fees for property owners.

The creation of the Rental Registry is an example of bureaucracy at its highest level of red tape, excessive rules and regulations, lack of discretion, and organizational dysfunction.

The Rental Registry duplicates much of the same information already given to the City when applying for a business certificate. Fees are already paid to have rental units and now the city is requiring additional fees to have that same information available to the public.

There will also be individuals that will access this information to the detriment of renters.

It is clear that the ordinance is not written to create and support fair rents for all parties involved but rather to punish all property owners.

Yolanda Perez

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear City Council members.

I wanted to share my thoughts on the proposed rent stabilization and just cause amendments.

While I understand that you may have campaigned on these measures, and that a number of your constituents would probably not vote for you again if you did not endorse these policies, I think you need to look at the larger economic picture of the long term effects of such measures.

While these measures may be beneficial for some tenants in the short term, the long-term effects have been proven and presented to you by UCSB's Peter Rupert on several occasions. The effect will be a deteriorated housing stock for those tenants that may benefit in the short run. You are eliminating any reason for landlords to maintain and/or improve their properties.

The reality is landlords have the ongoing expenses of annually increasing property taxes, utilities, insurance, and ever escalating maintenance fees. And of course, most will have a mortgage to pay. Contrary to popular notion, landlords are not billionaires.

So before you pass these measures, my question to you is: What are you going to do for the landlord when they do not have enough rent to cover all of these expenses and fix the plumbing when it breaks or replace a leaking roof or whatever?? You are going to have tenants paying a controlled amount of rent but they may end up with wet carpets if the roof leaks and the landlord doesn't have the funds to fix it. After all, the landlord's first priorities have to be paying the mortgage, taxes and insurance or they lose their property to foreclosure or tax sale. Have you considered these consequences?

Finally, I have lived in Santa Barbara my entire life. We have had a number of rent control measures come before us. They have never been decided by seven people!! They've always been decided by a vote of all citizens. Why is this different now?

I realize that for four of you, a million of these letters will probably not change your mind. I just felt I had to make my thoughts known. If you would care to discuss this my phone number is below.

Thank you for reading.

Regards,

Ed Edick

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
To Whom it May Concern;

We would like to go on record to oppose the nonsensical Stabilization ordinance as well as the Just Cause and Ellis act amendments.

I just cannot imagine that the committees as well as City Council members have REALLY looked at the consequences of these ordinances. Why would you want to ruin our city for everyone, especially our hard working Tenants?? We must all come back to the table and work out the things that matter to a hard working Tenant and a hard working Landlord. Saddling the ownership with these egregious ordinances does nothing to protect the Tenants, but rather will continue to cause rental prices to soar and less (far less) units to be available for rentals. It's been tried and failed before in other cities in California.

Our son who lives in Washington DC, says the rent control there is the worst he's ever seen until he read these ordinances. He also said that now there is a strong movement to back off these destructive overreach practices and allow the market to help sort through the prices and offerings.

Please be smart on these decisions and DO NOT allow these ordinances to pass.

Sincerely,

Kim and Geoff Crane

Crane Property Management

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
To whom it may concern,

Please know that as an 85 yr old owner of two rental parcels built years ago, I am opposed to your rent control proposals.

The cost of insurance, contractors, providers of services to keep my properties in repair have exploded in recent years. While I have never raised rent on my units more than 3%, I feel that it is my constitutional right to do so if I need to.

I also feel that it is outside the function of government of any kind to set prices on any goods or services, including housing.

I do not live in China or Cuba or Russia. This is the USA, and to manage my own property is my constitutional right therefore I beg you to reconsider this restrictive ordinance.

It will only cause degrading of current housing stock and reduce availability of quality housing for those who are in most need, low income residents such as mine.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mary Lou Weidlich

To the Santa Barbara City Council:

I am an owner of three rental units in Santa Barbara that will be negatively affected by the RSO. I lived in San Francisco for many years and owned rental property there. I have witnessed the failure of San Francisco's rent control: deterioration of housing stock, lack of construction of housing, inequities in who benefits from rent control (i.e. no means testing for tenants of rent control units), etc.

The Santa Barbara RSO will be a similar failure. I have kept my Santa Barbara rents below market rate for many years and in recent years have been trying to gradually bring the units closer to market rate. I have long term tenants in all the units and I have been very fair with their increases. Also in the past two or three years, I have spent many thousands of dollars in upgrades, repairs and maintenance. This ordinance will not allow me to reasonably recoup the costs or receive a reasonable return on my investment.

I concur with the SBRA positions on this ordinance and urge you to vote against it.

Sincerely,

Mimi Lyons

Honorable Mayor & Council Members:

We believe that Rent Stabilization in the form currently being discussed will do irreparable harm to the rental housing inventory in our City. The same is true for Just Cause and Ellis Act. We believe the tremendous admisistrative and other costs associated with this could be better and more fairly used in some form of Tenant Assistance fund.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our opinion.

Jay Braun

Since the city keeps discussing their 'budget crisis' I suggest the city halt the RSO, and instead adopt all the terms of the RSO for the city to operate under for a period of 3 years. During these three years, cap all city income, while allowing costs and expenses to increase dramatically and unchecked. At the end of the 3 year period, hire outside consultants to determine if the city budget is better off or worse off. If better off implement RSO as proposed, if worse off, permanently eliminate RSO from the city now and in the future.

You are welcome.

George Russell

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

Please do not vote in favor of the rental stabilization ordinance as written.

We believe that it will not help renters in Santa Barbara. It will cause we caring landlords to go out of business.

My husband built our 10 units apartment building in 1985, doing much of the physical labor with a friend. He was an individual Building Contractor doing new single family construction and remodels. I was at at home raising our 3 children. We lived frugally and saved our money. We were able to buy our home in Noleta in 1977. We still live there after 49 years.

In **1984**, we were able to buy an undesirable parcel next to Hwy. 101 zoned for a rental building. Talk about being scared that we would not be able to sustain the process to build. My husband was self-employed and needed to build a retirement income. We succeeded!

Through all these years of renting and maintaining our building for our tenant family, it has been an overwhelmingly good experience. We have carried our folks through some hard times. They, in turn, treat us with mutual respect. Our rents continue to be lower than comparable apartments. My husband does ALL the work that he is able to do to keep the building in good condition. His work allows us to keep our rents lower.

Our tenants are important to us. We know them as individuals. They know that they are safe with us. We have willingly included Section 8 tenants until they were no longer physically able to be with us. Our last and longest tenured tenant is 84 and we will continue helping her even though we could get much higher rent on the open market. We are certainly not the only landlords that handle their tenants with heart.

Please rethink this rent control. It is a naive approach to equity.

How will a 3% rent increase allow us to maintain our buildings?

There are so many of us that will eventually need to sell out. To whom? Will faceless owners take over? What will that look like?

You are trying so hard to deal with the cost of living for renters. Be careful that you don't cause more problems for those that rent.

Sincerely,

Jane Tucker

My name is Barbara Wood. I am an 81 year old woman who with my husband started to acquire property when I was 20. He loved to work on old houses. He is passed away now and I am left to handle our 7 rental homes. The rents now range from $2300 to $3400 a month. The amounts have gone up in the last 4 years because of all the talk of a rent freeze by the city. Also in the last 4 years the cost of insurance on the houses because of the fear of fire in this area has gone up. Some policies up to 3 times more than they were. The insurance companies cancel the insurance and then request that I clean the roof, trim or cut down plants and trees or so on. The insurance then is reinstated if the work is approved or I must find a new less acceptable company. The work that needs to be done on the houses now costs in the thousands of dollars not 100s like before.

And now this 37 page Rent Stabilization Ordinance is up for approval! It would obviously hurt me, a small time owner with low rents while owner with higher rents would not be so affected. It makes me think about selling but that too the city is considering attempting to stop. My point is, you are not stabilizing rents at all. You are causing chaos. I need a lawyer to help me understand the conditions stated in this ordinance. I got the message at the end that if passed you want me to pay the city for all the work the city has to do to handle this new ordinance. I think you should be helping me stay in business and find a way to control people or companies who are charging high rents. You could start by determining just what you think is high or unfair rent. This ordinance is not well thought out or fair. Please think about this problem and come up with a better solution for all!

Subject: *Public Comment – Proposed Residential Rent Stabilization Ordinance & Just Cause Amendments*

Dear City Council Members and Community Representatives,

I respectfully ask you to reconsider the proposed expansion of rent control for residential properties in Santa Barbara.

I am 85 years old, retired, and depend on my investments to supplement my limited retirement income. **In July of 2025, I purchased the six-unit apartment building at 1726 De La Vina Street for approximately $2.9 million, investing nearly half of the purchase price from my retirement savings.**

Since acquiring the property, **there have been substantial costs to improve it, including replacing the roof and spending approximately $110,000 on repairs and upgrades. I chose not to increase rents to provide my tenants with well-maintained homes while building stable, long-term relationships. My tenants pay rents that remain below current market levels.**

Despite these improvements**, the property currently generates a negative cash flow. I have a variable-rate mortgage at approximately 6.2%, resulting in monthly payments of about $9,000. In addition, I pay about $40,000 annually in property taxes, carry significant insurance costs $11,000 per annum, and employ a professional property manager because I am no longer able to manage the property myself.**

I purchased this property with the expectation that, over time, I could gradually adjust rents to reflect market conditions and offset rising operating costs. The proposed rent control measures would severely limit that ability, making it increasingly difficult to maintain the property and preserve my retirement investment.

I have also observed the long-term effects of strict rent control policies in other California cities. While well-intentioned, such policies often discourage investment in rental housing, reduce maintenance and improvements, and create unintended hardships for responsible property owners without solving the underlying housing shortage.

The proposed regulations would affect not only my financial security but also the future of my two daughters and grandchildren, who will eventually inherit this property along with its financial obligations and tax burdens.

I respectfully urge the City Council to protect both tenants and responsible property owners by encouraging housing investment rather than imposing additional restrictions that undermine private property rights and long-term confidence in our local economy.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of my comments.

Respectfully yours,

Kurt Motamedi, Ph.D.

Professor Emeritus, Pepperdine University

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
City of Santa Barbara staff, City Council, Mayor Rowse,

This Rent Control ordinance discriminates against good housing providers, Landlords, who have a fair and good working relationships with their tenants. I am widow and 20+ year owner of a12 unit apartment building, all 1 bedroom units, all below market rents. My long term tenants are mostly single women and men, with 2 couples as well, and several do work in the City or are retired. I raise rents $100/year when I offer them the renewal of the 1 year lease, as required by the City. I have an excellent relationship with my tenants, maintain the property very well, and this is my primary source of income. Small housing providers should be not face the same compliance burden as large corporations.

The 3% cap is unrealistic and will not even cover the fees and requirements that the City is planning to charge to implement this open-ended ordinance. There is no review provision annually to see if this is even helping, no ability to modify, no accounting process. Basically this unfair ordinance will discourage people from keeping and/or purchasing rental properties, which providing housing for local renters and it will diminish the local housing supply.

The registry collecting personal and financial information of property owners is a cyber threat to all of us. It appears that there is no economic analysis to justify the rental registry, petition process, and unrealistic 3% cap, with all of the costs falling on the landlords. Therefore there will be no way to stay up with inflation, increased insurance and utility costs, much less extraordinary repairs.

There needs to be more transparency from the Council on this ordinance, more time for review of the elements. The City already has in place many tenant protections. There is no incentive for small property owners to maintain and provide housing for local residents in this Ordinance. The unfair rental freeze needs to be adjusted so we can keep up with the increasing cost of maintaining our properties while this review takes place. I feel this Ordinance will do more harm than good for both tenants and landlords alike.

Sincerely,

Barbara McMullin

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Council members and Mayor,

After much debate and consideration, it is clear that the presently proposed rent stabilization will be a huge disaster for the City's housing. Its obvious to all that restricting rent increases to a fraction of what it actually costs to operated a rental property will result in the exact opposite intentions of housing availability.

I urge you to reconsider your very confusing and penalizing proposed rent stabilization ordinances and heed the advice of the SBRPA, the SBAR, economic experts, skilled labor representatives and lenders. All respected integral members of our city saying NO, while you listen to CAUSE, the Tenants union and other groups complaining that landlords are greedy capitalists that care nothing for the tenants.

Your intended goal of affordable housing has morphed into a huge bundle of legal nightmares that will result in less housing and pit landlords against tenants, this something that you created.

There is still time for you to rethink this very poorly proposed ordinance and take a different more realistic approach to housing in Santa Barbara.

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Greetings,

I am a resident landlord in Santa Barbara with two rental properties.

This ordinance does nothing to improve housing affordability.

It constrains a private free market and discourages further private investment in housing.

The public sector role should be to expand social housing with public investment. This increases the supply of housing which will lower costs of rent through competition with the private market supply.

Do not pass the RSO. Instead work on real practical solutions to the housing shortage with housing abundance.

Sincerely,

Gary Coates

Jimeno Road

Dear Council,

I have strived to be a responsible & fair landlord with over 45 years of City housing ownership. I enjoy being a housing provider because of the long term relationship that I've been able to build with my Tenants. I have Tenants of many professions who have lived or worked in my properties for over 25 years. I have extremely low turnover because my rents remain under market with very small yearly increases. Your RSO will create a burden on me by prohibiting a fair rent reset when a long term Tenant does vacate. When a long term Tenants leaves a unit and the rent moves up closer to market levels, that helps me finance the other existing lower rent paying Tenants. As others have pointed out, the extra burden of recent insurance hikes, repair costs and rising utility rates will discourage long term ownership. I believe the Mom & Pop relationship with Tenants will be severely damaged by your RSO ordinance.

Thank you,

John Lengsfelder

Heather Sturgeon

Santa Barbara Property Owner & Taxpayer

July 10, 2026

Re: Public Comment to Santa Barbara City Council: A Scathing Indictment of Socialist Overreach and Fiscal Malpractice on Rent Control

Honorable Mayor Randy Rowse, Councilmembers Meghan Harmon, Wendy Santamaria, Kristen Sneddon, and Oscar Gutierrez, and Members of the Council:

Go ahead and tell us how Here is a study done by Stanford University. things will be different this time…..

During the rent-controlled decade of the 1980's, Santa Monica experienced a loss of 775 low-income-renter households, a decrease of nearly 12 percent. The number of low-income-renter [19 Cal.4th 958] households increased over this period in every comparable city in Southern California without rent control.

Santa Monica also lost 285 very-low-income-renter households. This was the largest decrease in the number of very-low-income renters of any comparable Southern California city.

Concurrent with this exodus of economically disadvantaged renters under rent control, Santa Monica experienced a 37 percent increase in the proportion of households with very high incomes between 1980 and 1990. This population shift toward upper-income households occurred during a decade when the proportion of very-high-income households dropped by more than 8 percent in Los Angeles County as a whole.

Under rent control, housing in Santa Monica has become increasingly unavailable to young families. Between 1980 and 1990, the number of family households with children in Santa Monica fell by 1,299, a decline of more than 6 percent. No comparable city in Southern California without rent control lost family households over the decade of the 1980's.

The impact of rent control has been especially harsh on young families headed by a mother with no spouse. The number of female-headed households with children under the age of 18 in Santa Monica fell by 593 between 1980 and 1990, a decrease of more than 27 percent, despite an increase in such households in Los Angeles County as a whole.

Under rent control, Santa Monica's elderly population (age 65 or over) declined by 1.7 percent between 1980 and 1990, whereas the elderly population of Los Angeles County rose by more than 15 percent over the same decade. The elderly population increased over this period in every comparable city without rent control in Southern California.

Dear Mayor Rowse, Councilmembers Friedman, Jordan, Santamaria, Sneddon, Harmon and Gutierrez:

I write to you today to express my – as you might have guessed – extreme opposition to the Santa Barbara Rent Stabilization Ordinance. It will achieve nothing besides rent "stabilization," and as written will have profound, transformative, and do lasting damage to all landlords, real estate investors in rental properties, rental property conditions, and the availability of rental unit stock itself.

In the very short term, this misguided, fact- and history-bare ordinance may momentarily provide stabilized rents for some Santa Barbara residents, but will predictably create degrading buildings, impoverished landlords, and accelerate the selling off of existing rental units.

These effects of rent control have been universal, well known, long-acknowledged and tremendously corrosive in every location that they have been tried.

As the Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis states (Feb 12, 2024), "Microeconomics textbooks depict these rental price ceiling policies as causing supply to fall and demand to increase, leading to a shortage in the market. Suppressing the return on rental property investment does little to incentivize investors to increase the supply, or quality, of housing. Such policies may lead to a permanent change in the housing supply mix, pushing housing supply into the owned market and out of the rental market, and will make renting less affordable in the long term."

The Brookings Institute in 2018 wrote, "While rent control appears to help current tenants in the short run, in the long run it decreases affordability, fuels gentrification, and creates negative spillovers on the surrounding neighborhood. Caps on rents lead landlords to sell their rental properties to owner occupants so that landlords can still earn the market price for their real estate, as the return on their investments and assets consistently fail to meet real costs and market conditions."

The National Multifamily Housing Council has, as one of its key precepts, an essay titled "The High Cost of Rent Control." In it is stated "The profound economic and social consequences of government intervention in the nation's housing markets have been documented in study after study, over the past twenty-five years. Nevertheless, a number of cities around the country continue to impose rent controls, usually with the stated goal of *preserving affordable housing for low- and middle-income families*. Rent control does not advance this important goal. To the contrary, rent control has actually reduced both the quality and quantity of available housing.

“When a community artificially restrains rents by adopting rent control, it tells builders not to make new investments and tells current providers to reduce their investments in existing housing, *creating the perverse consequence of reducing, rather than expanding, the supply of housing.*”

Now, to the specifics of Santa Barbara’s proposed “Rent Stabilization Ordinance.”

1) Section 26.90.040 states that landlords can raise rents no more than 60% of the Consumer Price Index, or 3% of existing rents, annually. **WHY ARE LANDLORDS A PERSECUTED CLASS, THAT THEY ARE PENALIZED ON ALL COSTS OF INFLATION, MATERIALS, LABOR, TAXES, INSURANCE AND MORTGAGES?**

Are there any other segments of our industries that are likewise handcuffed to lower-than-inflation prices that they can charge? Why not? It seems that landlords current and future are targeted unfairly simply by offering people a place to live.

2) Public Registry: All private information on landlords *must now be entered into a public registry, for all to see and judge* - Ownership history, Rents, Assets, Tax Base. And a landlord MUST publish this information in this public registry, or face charges of FRAUD - and be prevented from renting out their properties, prevented from pursuing eviction of deadbeat tenants, and prevented from advertising their properties. **WHY MUST LANDLORDS EXPOSE ALL THEIR PRIVATE INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC WHEN THEY CANNOT EVEN CHECK A POTENTIAL TENANT’S FINANCES OR RENTAL HISTORY**, to help them assess a tenant’s ability to afford the rent? The question is - why would any landlord be foolish enough TO CONTINUE OFFERING THEIR PROPERTIES FOR RENT? Again - incredibly one-sided, and insanely unfair.

3) Section 26.90.070: Tenants may petition for lower rents, oppose their evictions simply by citing any dispute with the landlord or lack of repair or improvement not to their approval, or the rent calculation behind the rents they are charged. **ONE COMPLAINT BY AN ADVERSARIAL TENANT CAN HALT EVICTION PROCEEDINGS AND FORCE THE PROPERTY OWNER INTO THE COURTS.** Here we are again — incredibly one-sided, and insanely unfair.

4) Mortgage interest and property depreciation are *excluded from calculated expenses* — resulting in real losses to the land owner of upwards of 10-15% annually at current interest

and depreciation rates. The ordinance provides a “right of petition” by the landowner, but the lawyering costs, time loss and aggravation are an undue burden placed upon this select group of individuals and is a prime disincentive for anyone to continue providing rental units to the public

5) Capital improvement cost pass-alongs are impeded by the ordinance’s cap of $100/month or 10% of the existing rent. This calculation removes the incentive for any land owner to make needed and desirable repairs and improvements to their properties.

WHAT SANTA BARBARA IS REFUSING TO ACKNOWLEDGE IS THAT IT ISN’T LANDLORDS WHO ARE THE PROBLEM - IT IS THE DRACONIAN BUILDING CODES AND POLICIES THAT HAVE CREATED THIS HOUSING SHORTAGE TO BEGIN WITH.

No wonder no new housing is being built in this mad, mad, mad regulatory environment.

THESE SOCIALIST BUILDING POLICIES ARE CREATING THE HOUSING SHORTAGE - AND SANTA BARBARA’S PROPOSED “SOLUTION” IS TO INSTEAD TURN ON THE SMALL CLASS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO OFFER WHAT LITTLE HOUSING REMAINS FOR THE PUBLIC.

I am astonished that you Councilmembers who support these corrosive ordinances, and your staff, either do not know all this, or purposefully ignore the deep, old, and widespread evidence of these terrible policies.

It’s like the old Leftist saying - “Socialism/Communism is awesome - it just hasn’t been implemented *correctly*.” I wonder if the Councilmembers think that you are simply smarter than all throughout history, and *you* won’t be subject to reality, economics, and history? I am just appalled to see dangerous ideas like this “Rent Stabilization Ordinance” coming to fruition here.

We *were* thinking of renting our own house out while we go to Virginia to help with our grand babies who are due in a few months — but as my husband and I both instantly agreed — **WE WOULD RATHER SELL OUR DREAM HOME — AGAIN — RATHER THAN RENT IT OUT UNDER THESE CONFISCATORY POLICIES, ACCEPT SUCH RISK AND HEADACHES, AND POTENTIALLY LOSE IT ALTOGETHER.**

None of this is news. None of this is a surprise. None of this is unpredicted.

DO WHAT IS THE ONLY REALISTIC AND LOGICAL THING THAT WILL SOLVE SANTA BARBARA’S HOUSING CRISIS — LOOSEN YOUR DRACONIAN BUILDING REGULATIONS AND ALLOW HOMES TO BE BUILT SENSIBLY AND AFFORDABLY.

Thank you. *Elizabeth Crawford is a housing provider living in Goleta, CA*

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

Subject: Public Comment on the Proposed Residential Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Amendments Mayor Rowse and Members of the Santa Barbara City Council: I want to begin by thanking City staff for including me in several discussions regarding the proposed Residential Rent Stabilization Ordinance. I appreciate the time, professionalism, and effort devoted to understanding an issue that will significantly affect tenants, housing providers, property owners, and the broader community. I came to Santa Barbara at 18 years old to attend Santa Barbara City College and later graduated from UCSB. I built my career, business, and family here. Today, I am a local business owner, homeowner, property owner, father of three amazing boys, husband to my college sweat-heart, and caring member of our amazing community. For more than 15 years, I have worked directly with tenants, homeowners, small housing providers, large housing providers, buyers, sellers, investors, property managers, lenders, contractors, developers, and public agencies. Through hundreds of transactions, I have seen how housing policy affects not only rents, but also financing, property values, maintenance, insurance, construction, ownership decisions, and long-term housing supply. That experience has taught me that every participant in the housing market has a legitimate perspective. Tenants need stability and protection from unfair treatment. Housing providers need predictable rules, a reasonable return, and the ability to maintain and improve their properties. Buyers and lenders need enough certainty to commit capital. The City must address affordability today while protecting housing quality and availability for the future. These interests are interconnected and cannot be considered in isolation. I support the City's goal of creating greater housing stability. My concern is that rent stabilization, without the right policy framework, balanced governance, and practical understanding of housing operations, could ultimately harm Santa Barbara more than many currently recognize. The most significant consequences may not be immediate. They may emerge over time through reduced investment, deferred maintenance, fewer transactions, more conservative lending, fewer incentives to create rental housing, and greater concentration of ownership among those with the resources to navigate an increasingly complex system. The central concern is the cumulative impact of rent restrictions, registration requirements, petitions, hearings, disclosures, recording obligations, compliance deadlines, and administrative procedures. Individually, some provisions may appear reasonable. Together, they may create a system that is difficult and expensive for housing providers to understand and operate within. Santa Barbara's rental market is not made up solely of large corporations. Much of its housing is owned by local families, retirees, and individuals who worked, saved, borrowed, and accepted meaningful personal risk to acquire and improve property. Many do not have attorneys, accountants, compliance officers, or professional management teams. Owner-occupied duplexes and smaller residential properties also remain among the few realistic paths for working families to enter the housing market. A buyer may live in one unit, rent the other, improve the property over time, and use the income to make ownership possible. This allows ordinary people to build equity while also providing housing. That opportunity matters to me personally. I did not come to Santa Barbara expecting success to be handed to me. I worked to build a career, create a business, raise a family, and earn equity in this community. I want others who are willing to work, save, take responsible risks, and make meaningful sacrifices to have that same opportunity. Poorly designed policy can unintentionally protect those who already possess equity while making it harder for others to build it. Well-capitalized owners may be able to absorb regulatory costs and retain specialized professionals. A first-time buyer, local family, or small investor may not. The result could be fewer pathways to ownership and greater concentration of housing among large or highly capitalized entities. That would not be an equitable outcome. Private property rights and tenant protections should not be treated as opposing principles. A healthy housing market requires both. Owners must be able to recover legitimate expenses, make necessary improvements, receive a reasonable return, and operate under understandable and predictable rules. Tenants benefit when responsible owners remain invested in their properties and continue providing safe, functional, and well-maintained housing. Preserving investment in existing housing is particularly important in Santa Barbara, where much of the rental inventory is older. Roofs, plumbing, electrical systems, heating equipment, structural repairs, insurance, and life-safety improvements require substantial capital. If owners are uncertain whether those costs can be recovered, some will defer improvements, limit work to minimum requirements, or sell to buyers with different long-term objectives. Those decisions affect housing quality, neighborhood stability, and affordability. Policy should therefore be evaluated not only by its immediate effect on rents, but also by its long-term effect on investment and supply. The composition of the Rent Stabilization Board will also be critical. If the City intends to create a credible and durable program, the Board should include tenants, housing providers, neutral public members, and individuals with experience in property operations and housing economics. Professional expertise should not be viewed as an obstacle to fair policy. It is one of the strongest safeguards against unintended consequences. The Rental Registry should likewise be limited to information reasonably necessary to administer the program, protect confidential information, and avoid unnecessary administrative burdens. I recognize there are no simple answers. That complexity is precisely why the City should continue refining these ordinances before adoption. Once investment decisions change, properties are sold, maintenance is deferred, or ownership becomes less attainable, those effects may be difficult to reverse. Santa Barbara has an opportunity to create thoughtful and innovative policy that protects tenants while preserving responsible ownership, private investment, housing quality, and future pathways to equity. That outcome will require balanced participation, sound economic judgment, operational experience, and a willingness to identify unintended consequences before they become permanent. Santa Barbara should remain a community where someone can arrive with little, work hard, build a business, raise a family, purchase property, and earn equity over time. Our housing policies should protect that opportunity for the next generation, not unintentionally reserve it for those who already possess it. I would welcome the opportunity to continue contributing to this discussion. I am available to meet with Council members, City staff, or other stakeholders who would like to discuss these comments, review real-world operating examples, or better understand how the proposed policies may affect different participants in Santa Barbara's housing market. Thank you for your consideration and for continuing to engage with those who understand this issue from multiple perspectives.

Sincerely,

Jon Standring

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
We have a number of questions and concerns regarding the proposed ordinance.

What is the data behind the ordinance? It is very unclear what data, if any, is informing the decision process. How did the council identify the problem (landlords/housing providers) and the solution (penalizing landlords/housing providers).

Is housing better, more available, and more affordable in the cities that the ordinance is modeled after? Again, where is the data?

How does the city determine whether or not the changes are successful in the long run? What is the metric for success for Santa Barbara? And is there a plan to measure the results - a timeline of milestones?

We are adamantly opposed to a registry, especially one that only includes housing providers. Why are tenants not required to register? There are good and bad tenants, good and bad landlords. There are adequate remedies available in our community to resolve tennant/landlord issues. We view a registry as an invasion of privacy and we are not interested in putting our private life into the public sphere.

Rental property values have already begun to decline and capital flight is underway.

We have two rental units and have long charged significantly below market rent. Prior to the ordinance, if we chose to sell the property the new owner could raise the rent or not - it was thier decision to make. Now a prospective buyer has no choice and greatly reduces the propery value. The proposed ordinance unfairly penalizes housing providers who have been charging less than "market rate".

Why are landlords solely responsible for collecting 50% of the registry fees from tenants? There is no obligation on the tenants part to pay the fee - no accountability or recourse. If tenants are supposed to pay 50% of the fee the city should collect it, not the housing providers.

The city bureacracy is already difficult to navigate. When we contacted the city with questions about the ordinance, nobody was able to answer them. The person at the rental housing mediation program was unable to answer simple questions about how the law would apply to our particular situation. She recommended we get an attorney. I asked if the city attorney could answer the questions - seeing as how they drafted the ordinance. She responded that the city attorney does not work for - "does not represent" - the citizens of Santa Barbara but instead works for the city of Santa Barbara. We find it appalling that we have to bear the expense of hiring an attorney to make sense of the ordinance.

Part of the ordinance requires if one unit is removed from the market then all the other units on the property must be removed from the market. How does this help solve the housing shortage? How does this benefit anyone looking for housing?

Thanks for your consideration,

Doug Burdette

Julie Burdette

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

As the owner of 24 rental units in Santa Barbara, I strongly object to this initiative. My father bought our building in 1969 and it has remained in the family that entire time. When he passed in 2013, we have always honored his wishes to keep rental increases to a minimum for existing residents. We now find ourselves in a situation where where at least a third of our residents are at rental rates that are over $1000. Below current rents. A 2-3% cap will come nowhere near covering the increases in our operating costs; water and sewer have more than doubled in the past 7 years, insurance has increased a like amount, plumbing, landscape turnover costs and electrical labor have gone sky high and replacement costs for appliances and fixtures post COVID are at least double the costs in the past decade.

We maintain our property in pristine condition and upgrade flooring, appliances, heating systems etc. whenever our residents request. During COVID we froze rents for a year and a half and gave temporary relief upon request.

This ordinance will result in a decline in rental stock quality over the coming years as owners can no longer afford to maintain pride of ownership properties.

State law is relatively reasonable and effective as written currently. Under the current city initiative, no developer or investor will build any new rental housing in the foreseeable future in Santa Barbara.

Thanks for taking this under consideration.

Peter G Smith

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Mayor Rouse and Members of the Santa Barbara City Council,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed Rent Stabilization Ordinance that would cap annual rent increases at 60% of CPI or 3%, whichever is lower. While I understand the intention behind the ordinance, the proposed cap does not reflect the reality of rapidly rising operating costs for small property owners.

This year alone, our insurance premiums increased **40%**, umbrella insurance coverage rose **53%**, and our water costs went up **32%**. These increases far exceed CPI and make it impossible for owners to maintain safe, well-managed housing under the proposed limits. A cap of 3%—or even 60% of CPI—does not come close to covering the actual expenses we are required to absorb.

Small housing providers are already facing unprecedented cost pressures. If the City imposes rent caps that do not align with real operating costs, the long-term result will be deferred maintenance, reduced housing quality, and ultimately far fewer rental units available in Santa Barbara.

I respectfully urge the Council to reconsider this ordinance and adopt a policy that recognizes the true economic conditions facing property owners while still supporting tenants. A more balanced approach is essential to preserving the health and sustainability of our local housing market.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Fred and Michele Gallagher, Santa Barbara, CA

I oppose the rent stabilization ordinance and the rent registry. Please do not pass it.

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Mayor and Members of the Santa Barbara City Council:

I own and operate a small five unit rental property in Santa Barbara. I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed Rent Stabilization Ordinance in its current form.

I understand the serious affordability challenges facing Santa Barbara tenants. However, limiting annual rent adjustments to 60 percent of CPI or 3 percent, whichever is lower, does not allow housing providers to keep pace with increases in insurance, utilities, repairs, labor, regulatory compliance, property taxes, city fee increases, and capital improvement costs. These expenses frequently rise much faster than the permitted rent adjustment. I purchased this property the end of last year and my utility bill has already increased 25%.

Small property owners do not have the economies of scale available to large institutional landlords. When operating expenses increase faster than rental income, owners are forced to defer improvements, reduce investment in their properties, or reconsider whether to continue providing rental housing. This ultimately harms both tenants and the City's rental housing supply.

The proposed ordinance would also create a costly and complicated administrative structure involving a mandatory registry, annual fees, petitions, hearings, extensive reporting requirements, and a new Rent Stabilization Board. The City estimates that the program will cost approximately $2 million each year, or about $154 per affected unit. That money would be better directed toward programs that actually increase the supply of housing.

I am particularly concerned that the proposal:

1. Uses a rent cap that is disconnected from actual increases in property operating expenses.
2. Prohibits owners from carrying forward unused annual increases, effectively penalizing owners who voluntarily keep rents stable during a particular year.
3. Creates an expensive and adversarial petition process for owners seeking a constitutionally required fair return.
4. Adds substantial administrative and legal risk for small housing providers.
5. Discourages investment, maintenance, renovation, and the continued operation of rental housing.

Santa Barbara's housing shortage cannot be solved by imposing increasingly restrictive controls on the existing housing supply. The City should instead prioritize new housing construction, streamlined permitting, incentives for accessory dwelling units, and targeted assistance for tenants experiencing genuine financial hardship.

I respectfully ask the Council to reject the ordinance. At a minimum, the Council should adopt a more realistic annual adjustment tied to the full CPI, permit unused increases to be carried forward, reduce administrative burdens on small property owners, and provide a straightforward process for recovering documented increases in operating expenses.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Solomon Poyourow

Santa Barbara Rental Property Owner

I am a landlord that has kept rents well below market rate. Now that my taxes have increased as well as insurance and other expenses I will not be able to adjust rents and I will have more paper work with the rent registry plus I will be charged for the cost of the rent registry. There should be an exemption for landlords that have kept rents lower than market rate.

Thank you for listening.

I strongly urge to reject both of these ordinances.   Rent Control has consistently failed in every city tried as many studies that you have been provided and as Peter Rupert of the UCSB forecast has consistently told you.

Rent Control doesnt lower rents. It doesn't increase the supply. It doesnt make it easier to find affordable housing.   It increases rents in the long term and make housing more scarce.

So what does Rent Control do?   It is a great gimmick or give away for politician to get elected with.

PLEASE PUT THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA AND ITS RESIDENTS ABOVE YOUR OWN INTERESTS.

VOTE no on these two ordinances

Best Regards,

Steven Battaglia

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
July 9, 2026 **Subject: Public Comment Opposing the Proposed Residential Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Amendments** Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council, Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Residential Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause amendments. After carefully reviewing the draft ordinances, I respectfully urge the City Council not to adopt the proposal in its current form. While I support the goal of maintaining stable housing and protecting vulnerable tenants, I believe these ordinances will ultimately make Santa Barbara's housing challenges worse rather than better. The cumulative impact of these regulations is my greatest concern. While each individual requirement may appear reasonable in isolation, together they create an increasingly complex system of rent caps, petitions, hearings, registrations, disclosures, recording requirements, and ongoing administrative obligations. These layers of regulation will disproportionately burden the small housing providers who own much of Santa Barbara's rental housing. Unlike many larger cities, Santa Barbara's rental market is largely made up of local individuals and families rather than institutional investors. Many owners depend on one or two rental units to supplement retirement income, maintain family property, or help pay mortgages. These are not large corporations with legal departments and compliance staff. They are our neighbors. I strongly encourage the City to preserve the exemption for owner-occupied duplexes and to seriously consider exempting one- to four-unit residential properties. These smaller properties often represent the American Dream—allowing local families to become homeowners while providing much-needed rental housing. Burdening these owners with extensive regulation may discourage them from remaining in the rental market altogether. The California and United States Constitutions recognize that housing providers are entitled to earn a fair return on their investments. However, that protection must be practical, timely, and affordable. If exercising that right requires hiring attorneys, accountants, or appraisal experts, it becomes inaccessible for many small property owners. If the City proceeds with a rent stabilization program, the governing Rent Stabilization Board should include balanced representation from tenants, housing providers, and independent public members. A board that reflects only one perspective risks undermining public confidence in the program and making decisions that fail to consider the long-term health of the housing market. I also urge the City to limit any Rental Registry to only the information necessary to administer the ordinance, while protecting the privacy of both housing providers and tenants. Any documentation requirements should be reasonable and fairly shared by both parties. Most importantly, I encourage the City to consider the long-term consequences of rent control. Communities across California have shown that additional regulation can discourage investment in rental housing, reduce maintenance and property improvements, and ultimately decrease the supply of available rental units. Santa Barbara's housing

affordability crisis is fundamentally a supply problem. Policies that discourage the creation, preservation, and maintenance of rental housing risk making affordability even more difficult for future residents. As you continue considering these ordinances, I respectfully ask that you: • Preserve the exemption for owner-occupied duplexes and seriously consider exempting one-to four-unit residential properties. • Ensure any fair return process is objective, timely, and realistically accessible to small housing providers. • Create a balanced Rent Stabilization Board that fairly represents all stakeholders. • Simplify the ordinance wherever possible to reduce unnecessary administrative burdens. • Limit the Rental Registry to only the information necessary to administer the program while protecting privacy. • Continue engaging with local housing providers before adopting any final ordinance. Santa Barbara's housing challenges require thoughtful, long-term solutions that encourage investment, preserve existing housing, and increase supply—not policies that may unintentionally reduce housing opportunities over time. I respectfully urge the City Council to reconsider this proposal and work toward solutions that are fair, balanced, and sustainable for both tenants and housing providers. Thank you for your consideration and for your service to our community. Sincerely, Hutch Axilrod

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Mrs. Heather Sturgeon

Santa Barbara Property Owner & Taxpayer

July 9, 2026

Re: Public Comment to Santa Barbara City Council: A Scathing Indictment of Socialist Overreach and Fiscal Malpractice on Rent Control

Honorable Mayor Randy Rowse, Council-members Eric Friedman and Mike Jordan, and Members of the Council:

As a Santa Barbara property owner, landlord, and taxpayer, I submit this public comment with the clarity and urgency the moment demands. The 4-3 vote advanced by Meghan Harmon, Wendy Santamaria, Kristen Sneddon, and Oscar Gutierrez to construct a permanent rent (CONTROL) stabilization regime — complete with mandatory rental registries, enforcement bureaucracies, interim moratoriums, and retroactive controls — represents not enlightened policy but a calculated, ideologically driven assault on private property rights. Kristen Sneddon and Wendy Santamaria, both endorsed by the Democratic Socialists of America (with Wendy Santamaria having accepted direct campaign contributions from the organization), are advancing measures that mirror the socialist and communist toolkit: rental registries as instruments of surveillance and control, rent caps as the thin edge of government seizure of housing decisions.

Council member Kristen Sneddon's personal anecdote about her childhood in subsidized housing deserves honest reflection. She described a system that allowed her to receive an education, forge a career, and — together with her husband — attain a combined public-sector income in the hundreds of thousands of dollars annually. That trajectory illustrates the power of genuine upward mobility and self-sufficiency, not the mere appreciation of a subsidized asset. Yet the very councilmember who lived that success now champions policies that institutionalize dependency rather than replicate escape from it. Her majority's framework does not build ladders; it erects permanent regulatory cages, measuring success by how many units remain under bureaucratic management instead of how many families achieve independence.

This agenda is legally and morally indefensible. It constitutes a regulatory Taking of private property without just compensation, forcing landlords to subsidize tenants while the City simultaneously imposes uncapped cost increases. It embodies Unjust Enrichment, as tenants and government entities profit directly from owners' diminished returns. For senior landlords relying on rental income for retirement security, the squeeze amounts to Financial Elder

Abuse. The relentless layering of fees, mandates, and utility hikes without owner recourse is Taxation without Representation by another name — regulatory fiat substituting for democratic consent.

The council majority's breathtaking incompetence in stewardship of taxpayer dollars only compounds the outrage. Santa Barbara already labors under structural deficits despite the substantial new revenues from Measure C and Measure I. Yet the same faction that now demands millions more for rent-control enforcement has presided over grotesque misallocations: tens of millions squandered on State Street vanity projects and consultants; the closed-door acquisition of the debt-encumbered Casa Esperanza (PATH) shelter, saddling citizens with $3.2 million in existing obligations plus roughly $9.2 million in annual lease payments for the next thirty years-under a restrictive covenant; $500,000 funneled into illegal alien-related services with scant transparency; and $76 million expended on homelessness initiatives over the past four years — only to see the homeless population rise by hundreds. Unfunded pension liabilities exceed $344 million. All of this (there is so much more) while the City's own utility and fee increases (water, sewer, trash, clean energy) routinely outpace inflation and are legally treated as components of "rent" — costs landlords are forbidden to recover fully under the proposed 60% CPI cap.

The cynicism reaches its apex in the recent spectacle involving public safety. After committing roughly $100 million in taxpayer funds to construct a new police station, Councilmember Wendy Santamaria — with Kristen Sneddon's explicit second — moved to freeze the hiring of three police officers for a second consecutive year, "saving" a mere $576,000 that she proposed shifting into the general fund. In the same breath that this majority lectures landlords about affordability and "greed," it starves core public safety functions to paper over the fiscal holes its own priorities have created. Meanwhile, it prepares to erect yet another costly administrative empire for rent stabilization whose annual operating burden would rival Santa Monica's $6 million-plus machine — a burden the City cannot afford and will inevitably pass to residents through higher taxes, diminished services, and further debt.

It was Council members Kristen Sneddon and Wendy Santamaria who specifically brought in the out-of-towner's— attorneys from NGOs such as Movement Legal (including Leah Simon-Weisberg and Ethan Silverstein) and Public Advocates' Metropolitan Equity Team (including Samuel P. Tepperman-Gelfant, Skylar Spear, and Tahira Dean) — to draft the initial rent control ordinance. Even their own colleague Councilmember Meagan Harmon publicly condemned this opaque approach as one in which "a fully developed ordinance [was] written behind closed doors, created without public input, and without a single public conversation." Tracing specific grant allocations, reveals that these organizations are funded by progressive foundations, philanthropic donors, and grant networks that advance progressive Democratic Socialists of America (DSA)- with communist aligned tenant-rights and anti-displacement agendas. Investigating the full extent of their political influence channeled through these NGO's into local policymaking, raises serious questions about external ideological control over Santa Barbara policy and whether taxpayers are unknowingly subsidizing this machinery through aligned public or nonprofit channels. These deeply hidden layers of dark money are taking over sanctuary states and sanctuary cities. We are seeing it happen right before our very eyes.

Property owners are not the architects of this crisis. Decades of restrictive zoning, infill-only planning, and supply-constraining decisions — choices the City itself engineered — produced scarcity. The Ellis Act exists precisely as the state-law safety valve for owners who conclude that operating under ever-more-onerous rules is untenable; the majority's policies guarantee accelerated withdrawals, reduced rental stock, and greater hardship for everyone.

Mayor Rowse, Councilmembers Friedman, and Jordan have consistently raised the inconvenient questions of cost, outcomes, mobility, and fiscal sustainability. Their minority stance reflects responsible governance; the majority's reflects ideological capture.

Santa Barbara's property owners and landlords are the backbone of housing supply in this community. We pay taxes, maintain properties, and absorb the City's own escalating costs — only to be vilified and regulated into submission. Reject this entire rent control apparatus, the registries, the moratoriums, and every element of this failed socialist and communistic movement. Demand instead genuine solutions: regulatory relief to expand supply, ruthless elimination of waste, transparent prioritization of core services over ideological indulgences, and policies that honor the upward mobility Kristen Sneddon herself achieved rather than entrenching dependency.

Private property rights are not negotiable privileges to be rationed by elected ideologues. They are the foundation of liberty, prosperity, and the American Dream. The Council owes its citizens — and especially its property owners — far better than the incompetence, hypocrisy, and overreach now on display.

Respectfully & urgently submitted,

Heather Sturgeon

Santa Barbara Property Owner & Taxpayer

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Honorable Mayor and Members of the Santa Barbara City Council,

As you prepare for the upcoming meeting regarding the proposed Residential Rent Stabilization Ordinance, I am writing to urge the Council to consider a balanced, data-driven approach that protects both tenants and the small, local housing providers who maintain Santa Barbara's housing stock.

I am a long-time Santa Barbara resident and a small housing provider. I have owned a duplex and a single family home in the city for over 30 years. This property is not run by a giant corporation; it is managed by me, and it is a vital part of my life and our community's housing ecosystem.

Over the last three decades, I have taken pride in providing a safe, quality home for my tenants. However, the reality of maintaining a property in today's economic climate is becoming unsustainable. The costs associated with upkeep—including plumbing, electrical work, roofing, landscaping, and general repairs—have skyrocketed. My plumber and electrician cost significantly more than they used to, and property taxes continue to climb. Furthermore, we are facing new, compounding expenses, such as the Wildfire Assessment Fee and possible Registry fee.

Under the current trajectory of the proposed rent stabilization policies, it simply does not make sense that operational costs and city-imposed fees can increase at a rate that outpaces allowed rent adjustments. If housing providers cannot absorb or fairly pass on these rising costs—such as a wildfire assessment that could increase by up to 4% annually—we are forced into an impossible position.

Implementing rigid rent control laws that fail to keep pace with real-world inflation and the Consumer Price Index (CPI) will yield severe, unintended consequences for Santa Barbara:

· **Reduction in Housing Quality:** When operational expenses outpace income, housing providers lose the financial ability to fund critical capital improvements and routine maintenance.

· **Decrease in Housing Supply:** Over-regulation discourages investment in local housing and may force long-term, independent owners to sell their properties, often to larger corporate entities or short-term developers.

· **Burden on "Mom and Pop" Owners:** Small-scale providers (those owning fewer than 5 or 10 units) operate on thin margins. We are regular people providing homes for other people, and we cannot absorb these mounting deficits indefinitely.

I urge the City Council to exempt small-scale housing providers (owners of fewer than 5 or 10 units) from these restrictive caps, or to ensure any ordinance includes a fair, streamlined mechanism to account for CPI, inflation, and mandatory city fees.

Please ensure that local, small housing providers have a meaningful seat at the table as you move forward. We need balanced solutions that support renters without placing an insurmountable burden on the very people who provide and care for Santa Barbara's rental homes.

Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your careful consideration of the long-term impacts of this policy.

Sincerely,

Marc Chung

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Greetings,

I am a small Santa Barbara rental property owner. All my operating costs continue to rise: sewer, water, trash, insurance, property taxes, maintenance, repairs, etc, etc.

Other regions that have attempted rent control have found the following, well documented impacts, to occur post-rent control:

- rental housing stock evaporates as owners sell or convert apartments to condo's
- a significant decline in quality of rental housing as owners defer maintenance
- rental property values and resale pricing will decline on multifamily housing - reducing property tax revenue
- violation of the right to privacy via the rental registry
- significant liabilities to the city and county for rental registry data breaches
- reduced rental turnover as tenants "stay put" effectively further reducing "supply" as vacancies reduce
- increased incidents of properties being sublet illegally - common problem in all rent control areas
- a discriminatory limit on rent increases based upon property age and type
- rent caps at 60% of CPI or 3% is a taking of property
- the "hearing officer" may be given significant and broad authority, but at what risk and liability? what will be the job description? educational requirements? residence requirements?
- creation of the "rental registry" creates an additional liability of data breaches and requests private information - creating a new risk for the city/county

This registry and proposed rent control create a huge administrative bureaucracy and is merely a "feel good" piece of legislation. The current city council will not have to deal with the impacts, your successors will need to address the failings and repercussions.

It will have the exact opposite effect being sought.

Ralph W. Nobbe

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Santa Barbara City Council,

I am writing as a resident of Santa Barbara and a professional in the local housing market to express my opposition to the proposed rent stabilization ordinance. I appreciate the time and effort you have invested in serving our community, and I respectfully ask that you carefully reconsider this proposal before taking further action.

As a property manager and leasing specialist for a moderately sized local property management company overseeing 120+ apartment units, I have a unique, ground-level view of how the housing market actually functions — particularly for relatively affordable units. Capping rents in Santa Barbara while rates continue to rise in surrounding areas will place ever-increasing demand on an already strained local housing supply. I see this daily in my work: when I market a reasonably priced apartment in Santa Barbara, the response is overwhelming, making it nearly impossible for tenants to secure housing and turning the leasing process into a stressful ordeal for landlords as well. If Santa Barbara rents are held below market rates relative to neighboring communities, this imbalance between demand and available inventory won't just continue — it will worsen with each passing year.

The root cause of our housing shortage and rising rents is not landlord greed, but decades of restrictive building policy that has allowed demand to far outpace supply. Rather than intervening in the market with punitive rent caps, the City's efforts would be far better spent addressing the supply-and-demand imbalance directly — streamlining permitting, easing zoning restrictions, and allowing builders to build in response to actual market need. This is the surest path to correcting the underlying imbalance, rather than treating its symptoms.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to reconsider the rent stabilization ordinance and instead pursue policies that allow the local housing market to reach a natural, sustainable equilibrium. Thank you for your time, your consideration, and your continued service to our community. I hope you will weigh the long-term impacts of this ordinance carefully before reaching a decision.

Respectfully,

William Radis

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

I am writing this comment in opposition of the rent control proposed by the Santa Barbara City Council. I believe the program will be disastrous and will result in rental units being sold and converted to primary residences since landlords will not be able to get a reasonable rate of return. Rental properties are seeing a 20% or more decrease in value with this program looming. This will have a consequence on property taxes being collected

A 3 percent rent cap will not allow landlords to cover rapidly rising insurance prices, utility prices and repairs. Tying the program to 60% of CPI will result in lower allowable increases. The current State of California guidelines are fair enough for both renters and landlords.

The program allows for exemptions for properties built in 1995 or newer. Older properties need more work for general upkeep so this doesn't make sense to me. With such small rent increases being allowed landlords will not be able to afford to keep their properties in good shape which will result in renters living in dilapidated units.

This program will hit small property owners especially hard.

Sincerely

Mark Christman

Members of City Council,

I came to speak to you at the June 9th City Council meeting in regard to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance. I was told that I had 2 minutes to speak. I diligently had my husband time me until I got it right. When the motion was called, I was informed by the mayor that we would only have 1 minute to speak. At that point, I began to panic and spoke anyway. What a disaster!! So much for that Public Speaking Class in college😁. Here is another stab at it:

As you can infer from my e-mail address, I am a retired accountant and had a practice in Santa Barbara for over 30 years. After reading over the Ordinance, this is what I deduce from it:

- **ANNUAL INCREASE CAP** California has a form of rent control already in place, AB1482. AB1482 limits the annual rent increases to 5% plus the local CPI, capped at 10%. What was wrong with that? Somehow, City Council felt that this law was not restrictive enough and decided to hire consultants (BROKE as the City is, AND openly admitting at the meeting that they have been spending the Reserves) to come up with a new, more stringent law. The consultants suggested the MOST STRIGENT limits possible, 60% of CPI with a cap of 3%. This Ordinance will strangle housing providers with water in the City going up 22%, fire insurance tripling, not to mention the cost of plumbers, appliances and so much more.
- **RENTAL REGISTRY** Again, the BROKE CITY decided that they need a Rental Registry and a Rental Board to oversee Housing Providers at the projected cost of two million dollars. It is stated that they will pass this cost onto the landlords (oh goodie, another cost for us) at the projected price of $154/unit. I strongly believe that the cost will prove out to be much more than this. However, you are allowing us to pass through 50% of the cost to the tenant and charge them in 12-month increments. (Wait a minute, I though this ordinance was to SAVE tenants money, not have them pay more???) In my case, at 73, I will have to hire someone to complete this registry and maintain it, just another cost.

In closing, you are strangling housing providers income and adding more costs. How in the world do you see this as fair? It is apparent that this City Council cares only for the tenants (many of whom are not long-standing residents) and the housing providers (who ARE long standing residents and give back to the local economy in the forms of property taxes, business licenses and permits) are treated unfairly. I have come to the conclusion that I will sell my units if this Ordinance passes (a developer has already approached me). His plan is to tear down the buildings built in 1963 and replace the rental units with condos because building rental units in his words are "just not profitable". Not quite sure what you are achieving with this Ordinance, because so many housing providers are now looking to get out of the business due to this ordinance's cost and extra work. What was wrong with the State law that was already in place? Why did the City spend money they didn't have to make business in Santa Barbara so much harder?

After the sale, I will join my daughter who lives in Puerto Vallarta (after she was laid off by a Fortune 500 company who decided to leave Santa Barbara due to its lousy business climate). Puerto Vallarta (Our sister-city) reminds me so much of OLD Santa Barbara, where you can walk down the main street of town, shop and /or eat, know the shop and restaurant owners by name, see your neighbors and tenants, smile and share a story or two, no matter their gender, race or age. Now, anger exists between housing providers and tenants, city leaders and longtime residents who only want the very best for Santa Barbara and to provide housing for those unable to own their own. Tragic.

Sincerely,

Elvina Geauque

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear City of Santa Barbara:

Please submit this public comment to the record. Thank you.

I appreciate the complexity involved in the effort to "control" the cost of rentals in Santa Barbara. This issue is larger than landlords, larger than renters. It is an entire economic condition throughout this State and a great part of the world, impacting every aspect of living—from raw materials to end use.

The present Rent Control proposal, to my perspective as a renter and a small business owner, is teetering our beautiful city on the edge of fatality.

I liken this to the City restricting medical doctors of every category, to how much they can charge a patient for services, and how their fees cannot be equal to inflation, but actually less than. It would not take long before the doctor would be forced to limit the care they could provide to any given patient, leave the patient with a "sorry, my hands are tied" as to what I can do for you and send them home. We all can imagine what would naturally occur in that situation.

The patient would not completely heal; the originating problem would begin to compromise other parts of the body over time until the patient develops a multiple of problems that are very costly to address, let alone repair. If they go to another physician as a new patient, the cost would be exorbitant and insurance would simply deny coverage. If this is extrapolated over a large swath of the population, you can easily see the disaster and end destruction.

This issue cannot be handled effectively with a choke hold zip tie on the providers of rentals without passing the same choke hold onto the renters and the beauty and quality of life in this city.

This proposal is a death knell. In the name of the bigger vision that we can all support, and to ongoing prosperity and growth, kill the proposal to save the people. We all need it.

Thank you.

Rev. Miriam Lindbeck

I oppose this! Not fair to small landlords who provide housing.

All maintenance & insurance costs are high!
C Scott McCosker

Comments on the Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment.

I have owned rental property in Santa Barbara for over 40 years. I've always believed that if you treat people fairly, they usually stay, take care of the property, and everyone benefits. Because of that, I've never tried to squeeze every last dollar out of my tenants. In fact, I know I could have charged more over the years, but I chose not to.

I understand why the City is looking at rent stabilization. Housing is expensive, and I know many renters are struggling. I don't think most small landlords are against helping tenants. Many of us have been trying to do that for years in our own way.

What worries me is that this ordinance will end up penalizing the landlords who have already been keeping rents reasonable.

If my rents become the starting point for future increases, then I'm locked into the lower rents I've voluntarily charged over the years. Meanwhile, someone who charged the highest rent the market would bear starts from a much higher base. That doesn't seem fair. It almost feels like I made the wrong decision by trying to be reasonable.

I'm also concerned about rising costs. Insurance has gone up dramatically. Repairs cost more every year. Materials cost more. Labor costs more. Property taxes don't go down. For example, I am in the midst of spending over $100,000 to upgrade the entire electrical system in my 21 unit apartment building. The proposed annual increases will not keep pace with those expenses.

I know the ordinance includes a process for asking for additional rent increases, but as a small property owner, I hope I never have to go through something like that. I don't have attorneys or accountants on staff. I just want to maintain my property, respond when something breaks, and provide good housing.

My biggest concern is that policies like this will discourage the kind of landlord the City actually wants to keep. Santa Barbara has many small property owners who know their tenants by name, take pride in their buildings, and try to be fair. We're very different from large investment companies that view housing strictly as a business.

I hope the City can find a way to protect tenants without making it harder for responsible landlords to continue doing what they've been doing all along. I believe there is room for a balanced approach that recognizes both the need for housing stability and the realities of owning and maintaining rental property.

Thank you for listening and for considering my comments.

Shan Obrien Goldman

"In many cases, rent control appears to be the most efficient technique presently known to DESTROY A CITY - except for bombing."

Socialist Swedish economist, Assar Lindbeck

Susan Pate

GCI, ABR, ReBAC, Realtor

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Re: Lack of Transparency and Suppression of Public Comments on Rent Control Ordinance - An Attack on Property Owners

Dear Mayor, City Council Members, and City Administrator:

I am writing as a property owner in Santa Barbara to condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the City's egregious and deliberate lack of transparency regarding public comments on the proposed RENT CONTROL ORDINANCE. Your handling of this process is not only undemocratic but constitutes a direct assault on landlords and property rights in our community.

Instead of releasing submitted public comments in real time for all residents to review—as any government committed to openness would do-you are withholding them until a filtered "matrix" appears in the staff report, well after the comment period ends. This secretive tactic prevents property owners and the public from examining the full range of input, responding to opposing views, or preparing informed opposition before the upcoming Council meeting. It is a blatant effort to control the narrative and shield your anti-landlord agenda from scrutiny.

Landlords in Santa Barbara are already under relentless attack through this rush toward rent control. Your refusal to provide transparent access to public comments compounds the injury by silencing the ability of affected property owners to engage meaningfully. How can we defend our investments, our properties, and our rights when you hide the very feedback that is supposedly informing this punitive policy? This is not governance; it is manipulation designed to ram through damaging regulations while minimizing opposition.

The public deserves immediate access to all raw comments submitted during this period, posted online without delay.

Summarizing them into a convenient staff matrix only after the fact is unacceptable and deeply suspicious. It undermines the legitimacy of the entire process and suggests a predetermined outcome favoring tenant advocates over the rights of property owners who provide housing in this city.

I request that the City reverse this opaque policy immediately: publish every public comment received on the Rent (Control is the correct word to use) Stabilization Ordinance in full and unfiltered form on the City website right now. Give property owners and the public the transparency needed to scrutinize the input and participate effectively ahead of the Council meeting. Failure to do so will only confirm that this process is rigged against landlords and further erode what little trust, (if any) remains in City Hall.

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Property owners will not stand idly by while our livelihoods are targeted through secretive, heavy-handed tactics. Correct this failure at once or prepare for intensified public backlash.

Sincerely,

Heather Sturgeon

Santa Barbara Property Owner

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear City Council members,

I am strongly opposed to the proposed Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause and "Ellis Act" amendments. I am a small landlord in the city. I own one rental property that contains three detached units. My wife and I purchased the property (and scrimped and saved to do so) in the hopes that one day our kids would be able to live in this amazing town, because we saw how out of control things were even 20 years ago. After 20 years of owning and renting out this property, we are **finally breaking even** on the mortgage and taxes, etc. This isn't a sob story, we're very proud that we were able to buy and hold on to this property. But it was a financial decision and there are financial realities. As written, it doesn't even seem like we could remove one unit from the market in order to allow our adult children to live there – am I reading that right?

We have wonderful tenants and do everything we can to keep the rent reasonable so they can stay in their units. We manage the units ourselves and do the landscaping and basic maintenance ourselves, which keeps costs down. But the costs of owning and maintaining these units are real, and the regulations you're proposing disproportionately impact us as owners.

In my specific case, two of the units are older (built pre-1940) and would be subject to the new rules. These units require more maintenance just given their age and construction materials. We built the third unit in 2020, so it would not be subject to the rules. I feel like the one new unit will need to bear the burden of the costs needed to maintain the older units because the allowed yearly increases on the regulated units are not sufficient to cover those ever-increasing costs.

We would like to replace the roof one of the older units (est. $20,000), but this ordinance will significantly limit our ability to do that. The proposal for capital improvements is a joke – we should be able to make repairs to my rental units when they are needed, without going through a complicated process that at best would result in an extra $100 per month. Do the math – the roof replacement will not happen.

As another example, in May our fire insurance went up more than $700 per unit per year. As written, the ordinance would only have allowed us to increase the rent by less than $670 (in 2025, 60% of CPI = 1.8%). The reality is that we have not been allowed to increase rent at all due to the moratorium. And then you propose to add on the cost of the rental registry, and we have no idea how much that will be. We're "allowed" to split the cost with the tenants, but nothing in the ordinance mandates that the tenants actually pay that "pass-through" cost, and non-payment would not be justification for eviction. Would their share of the rental registry cost be more than what you're "saving" them with this ordinance? We have no idea because those numbers have not been provided.

To summarize my SIGNIFICANT concerns with the ordinance:

1. It only benefits existing tenants in existing units. If you need to move (new job, expanding family, etc.) you lose the benefit of this ordinance, and landlords will need to jump rents significantly whenever a tenant moves out to make up for lost revenue. Maybe your family is ready to downsize, but giving up the stabilized rent means you won't move, and therefore another family doesn't have the ability to benefit from the larger unit coming back onto the market. This doesn't solve the real problem of unaffordable rent, it only puts a band-aid on it. There must be better solutions out there. (Incentives for keeping rent low? Tax breaks for renting as Section 8? Emergency funds to keep people in their unit when there are medical or other financial emergencies?)

2. It penalizes older units, which are naturally more affordable but also require the most ongoing investment to keep them habitable.

3. It favors tenants that are semi-long-term. For example, someone who seems like they will be moving on in a year or two (or less, such as Visiting Nurses) rather than someone who is stable and wants to remain in the unit for many years. Let's not even discuss short-term rentals (which I am glad that you are proposing to significantly limit).

4. Repairs and maintenance **will be deferred**, thereby degrading both the appearance and safety of our city.

5. It requires the addition of many new staffers and unknown overhead costs. This **burden is placed on landlords <u>and</u> tenants.** After watching your budget deliberations over the last month, the city needs to be reducing its budget, not adding to it!

6. You may be creating "affordable" housing units as defined under state law, which ultimately limits what can happen on the property[1]. I imagine you are fine with this because affordable housing is your goal, but does this constitute a legal taking?

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[1] Under California's Housing Accountability Act (HAA) and the Housing Crisis Act (HCA), demolition of certain housing units — including naturally affordable ones — is subject to strict conditions. The HCA, as amended by AB 1218 (2023) and SB 8 (2021), prohibits cities from approving a project that would demolish protected housing units unless the project creates at least as many new units as are demolished (no net loss). "Protected units" include affordable housing units, and naturally affordable (affordable without a covenant) units are considered affordable for the purposes of these protections. If demolition is allowed, the project must replace all existing or demolished protected units with equivalent units.

7. I think it will push people to demolish these older, naturally affordable units to build new units that will be exempt from the program. That doesn't help long-term affordability. We need developers to add units, not tear down ones that already exist and are more affordable.

8. Section 26.90.050.D starts with as unjustified position ("the net operating income received by the landlord in the base year provided a fair return" and "the base rent for a covered rental unit provided a fair return at the time it was established.") and penalizes landlords that have kept rents low (there are many out there).

9. Why are there so many exceptions to the ordinance?

10. Rent control hasn't proven successful in other cities. This version isn't so different that it will be the exception.

If you still feel like this is a good idea for Santa Barbara, I request consideration of the following changes:

1. Allow the general adjustment (26.90.040.B) to be the **CPI or 5%**, whichever is **greater**. This is still less than allowed units state law, but provides for some reasonable return and is less punitive to landlords.

2. **Limit the rental registry fee**. If landlords can only raise rent by a limited amount, the city should be held to the same standard, as any increases there will hurt both landlords and tenants (assuming tenants actually pay the "pass-through" fee). Section 26.90.110.B allows the rental registry fee to be adjusted **at any time** and with no upper limit; It should be limited to 60% of CPI if rents are limited in that way. But then you wouldn't be able to fully recover the cost of implementing the program... Same predicament you're putting landlords in.

Landlords are not (always) the enemy. They are needed. Not everyone can afford to buy a house/condo, so you need people to be in the business of renting units. It is a business, as much as you don't want it to be. Penalizing the people providing those housing units is not the way to go.

Yes, Santa Barbara has an affordability problem and a housing shortage - it always has[2]! But this is not the solution. It will push out the small local owners in favor of corporations that will hire management companies thus increasing rent further.

Happy to discuss any of these concerns with you further. Sincerely, Larry DeBusk

[2] In 1968 voters approved Proposition C, which authorized publicly financed low-income housing development. In 1969 the Housing Authority was established to manage and develop affordable units.

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Hello City Council Members,

I oppose this ordinance because I do not believe it will achieve its intended goal of creating more affordable housing. Instead, it is likely to have unintended consequences that will negatively impact both property owners and tenants.

Policies like this make it increasingly difficult for small, "mom-and-pop" landlords to navigate the constantly changing and burdensome regulations. Many of these owners have invested their savings into providing rental housing, yet they are facing an environment that is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. As operating costs continue to rise—including insurance, maintenance, utilities, taxes, and repairs—property owners need a reasonable ability to keep pace with inflation.

When owners are unable to recover these increasing costs, buildings inevitably suffer. Necessary maintenance and improvements are delayed, resulting in a decline in the quality of the existing housing stock. This hurts tenants just as much as it hurts landlords.

These policies also discourage local ownership. As smaller property owners are forced to sell, their buildings are increasingly purchased by large corporations with the financial resources and legal teams necessary to manage the growing regulatory burden. That is not a positive outcome for our community. Local landlords are invested in this town and often provide more personalized, responsive management than large institutional owners.

California already has statewide rent stabilization laws that place reasonable limits on annual rent increases while allowing adjustments that reflect inflation. Those protections strike a more balanced approach by protecting tenants while recognizing the legitimate and rising costs of owning and maintaining rental housing.

Affordable housing will not be created by placing additional restrictions on the people who already provide it. We need policies that encourage investment in housing, preserve our existing rental inventory, and support both tenants and responsible property owners. Continuing to impose more restrictions on landlords will only accelerate the loss of local owners, reduce investment in existing buildings, and ultimately make our housing challenges worse, not better.

Thank you!

Aneta Jensen

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Mayor and Members of the Santa Barbara City Council:

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed Rent Stabilization Ordinance in its current form. I appreciate the seriousness of Santa Barbara's housing affordability challenges and recognize the desire to protect residents from displacement. Stable housing is important for our community. However, this ordinance does not solve the underlying causes of housing scarcity and risks making the problem worse by discouraging the private investment necessary to preserve and improve Santa Barbara's rental housing supply.

Rental housing exists because individuals choose to invest their capital in providing it. Whether that investor is a family that owns one duplex, an individual saving for retirement, or a large institutional fund investing on behalf of pension participants and ordinary individuals, the economic reality is the same: capital flows toward places where investment is treated fairly and away from places where regulation creates excessive risk and uncertainty.

The proposed ordinance sends a troubling message to housing providers: invest your money, assume the financial risk, maintain and improve the property—but accept government-imposed limits that may prevent rental income from keeping pace with rising costs.

I have direct experience with this issue. I recently made a substantial investment improving a rental unit in Santa Barbara, including upgrades intended to preserve and enhance the quality of the housing available to tenants. Those decisions were made because there was a reasonable expectation that continued investment in the property made economic sense. Policies like the proposed ordinance fundamentally change that calculation. If future improvements result in increased costs but the ability to recover those costs is restricted or uncertain, property owners will naturally reconsider whether those investments are prudent. The long-term result will not be better housing; it will be less investment in the existing housing stock.

The proposed annual rent adjustment limit of 60% of CPI or 3%, whichever is less, is especially concerning. Because the adjustment is below inflation by design, rental income will steadily lose purchasing power over time even while the real costs of operating housing continue to increase. Insurance premiums, repairs, construction labor, materials, utilities, taxes, and regulatory compliance costs do not rise at a fraction of CPI. A formula that guarantees revenue growth below inflation creates a predictable long-term imbalance.

The ordinance also creates a fundamental fairness problem by placing a disproportionate burden for solving a citywide housing challenge onto one narrow group of residents: owners of certain non-exempt rental properties. Housing affordability is a community issue caused by decades of limited supply, high demand, construction costs, land constraints, and regulatory barriers. It was not created by the particular subset of property owners who happen to own multifamily housing built before an arbitrary date.

If Santa Barbara believes affordable housing requires public subsidy, that burden should be addressed broadly as a public responsibility—not assigned selectively to one class of property owners simply because they own a type of property that is politically easier to regulate.

The distinctions created by the ordinance are also difficult to justify. Two property owners may own similar properties, provide similar housing, and serve similar tenants, yet one may face extensive restrictions while another is exempt based on factors such as construction date, property configuration, or ownership structure. These classifications do not reflect who contributed to the housing shortage or who has the ability to solve it.

I am also concerned that the ordinance may reduce the availability of rental housing. Owners faced with increasing regulation may choose to sell, convert properties to owner occupancy where allowed, defer improvements, or redirect future investment elsewhere. Santa Barbara already suffers from insufficient housing supply. Policies that discourage participation in the rental market will only intensify that shortage.

The proposed ordinance may provide short-term benefits to some current tenants, but it does so at the cost of material financial injury to both the providers of that housing and to the other tenants in this market who are not subject to the ordinance. The long-term consequences should not be ignored. Discouraging investment, reducing incentives to maintain and improve properties, and shifting public responsibilities onto a narrow group of residents will not create more housing.

I urge the City Council to reconsider this approach and pursue policies that increase housing supply, encourage investment, and address affordability in a way that is fair and sustainable for the entire community.

Respectfully,

Roger Edgar

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Re: Opposition to Proposed Rent Stabilization Program Restrictions

Dear Mayor, Councilmembers and Staff:

Meridian Group Property Management, Inc. provides property management to numerous owners who have properties within the city limits. Some owners have just one or two properties with a limited number of units, others have three or four properties, and a small handful have larger buildings with dozens of units per building.

The management fees charged to owners are based on the estimated average amount of time that will need to be spent managing the property. This includes communication with owners and tenants, maintaining the properties through necessary repairs, collecting rent, providing notices to delinquent or lease violation tenants, providing the accounting financials to owners, etc…The passing of this ordinance will result in management fees having to increase due to rent registry obligations, lease language changes, accounting requirements and legal consultation.

With the proposed annual rent increase limit of 60% of the CPI or 3%, **whichever is lower,** and based upon the past few years' average CPI, owners cannot expect to be able to raise rents by more than 1.8% in a 12-month period. Due to the temporary rent freeze, you have already penalized owners by not allowing a rent increase for the current 12-

month lease renewal tenants have signed after 12/15/25. If a permanent ordinance passes, you will essentially have restricted owners to income from rent to 1.8% over

a 2-year period. This is not in keeping with California constitutional law, allowing a fair rate of return on investment properties, especially if an owner had done capital improvement work in 2025.

We have seen property insurance increase significantly over the past few years, in some cases 60-100%, even after no claims filed. The cost for repairs (labor and material)

increases each year. A property with 16 or more units requires an onsite employee with payroll expenses. A single property owner of a fourplex with a mortgage may not be able to maintain the property in the best possible manner due to restricted revenue. Tenants would continue to live in units with less energy-efficient windows, older appliances, flooring, and common area landscaping for curb appeal will be reduced. Owners will likely stop making capital improvements.

The rental registry program is not transparent, and we anticipate staff having to spend more time on these properties due to the numerous requirements and restrictions. It is unclear if the annual registration will be based on an annual lease renewal date or if all rental units will have to be registered during the same defined period (i.e. every January 1-31). There is no reference to even an estimate of what each unit registration and reregistration will cost. Will the owner have to pay $150, $200, or $500 per unit to support this program? According to the draft ordinance, the City Council can change the fee amount whenever it wants.

I strongly urge the City Council to reject the current proposed ordinance and spend more thoughtful time and consideration to produce a balanced ordinance that does not ultimately force properties off the market or reduces the quality of the property the tenants are living in.

Sincerely

MERIDIAN GROUP

Real Estate Management, Inc.

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Re: Public Comment for Opposition to Proposed Rent Stabilization Program Restrictions

Dear Mayor, Councilmembers and City Staff

I am the owner of 4 residential property units within the City limits. Though I understand the need for more affordable housing in the area, creating a program that ultimately makes it impossible for an owner to retain ownership of the property as a rental property will result in less housing available. The increase in State, County and City laws and regulations has made it necessary for me and other "mom and pop" landlords to no longer able to manage their own properties. Property managers are having to seek legal counsel to make sure their communication with delinquent and derelict tenants is correct.

Your proposed annual rent increase limit of 60% of the CPI or 3%, **whichever is lower,** and based upon the past few years, we can expect not to be able to raise rents by more than 1.8% in a 12-month period. The insurance on my properties has increased over 60% in the past 3 years, and since one of the properties is 16 units, there are payroll costs related to the onsite supervisor. I have spent over $110,000 on landscaping and exterior property maintenance, and over $510,000 for repairs and maintenance (not chargeable to tenants) in the past 3 years. It is very unclear how you determined that 3% or lower increase as a maximum was determined.

By placing a temporary freeze on raising rents after 12/15/25, while also already mandating owners to provide 12-month lease renewals, you are denying me and other owners the right to collect any increase for 12 months. At the very least, your temporary ordinance should have allowed the rent to be increase but with a caveat that a credit would be issued for the amount of increase over a permanent ordinance.

If I were to decide to sell any of these properties any prospective owner would have to consider the property taxes associated with new valuation, insurance, number of occupied units and the various fees and restrictions associated with the property and tenants. This may make it difficult to sell the property.

The rental registry requirement and program is not transparent. There is no reference to even an estimate of what each unit registration will and reregistration will cost, and this is yet another situation where my property manager will have to spend more time on the management of my properties. I expect my management fee charge will be increased as a result, and my net operating income will be further reduced.

I urge the City Council to spend more thoughtful time and consideration to produce a balanced ordinance that does not ultimately take properties off the market or lessens the quality of the property the tenants are living in.

Sincerely,

Robert V. Kooyman, Trustee

Josephine K. Van Gelderen Trust

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Re: Opposition to Proposed Rent Stabilization Program Restrictions

Dear Mayor, City Councilmembers and Staff:

I am the owner of two residential property units with a total of 17 units within the City limits. Seven of the current seven tenants receive housing assistance. I understand the need for more affordable housing in the area, but creating a program that ultimately makes it impossible for an owner to retain ownership of the property as a rental property will result in less housing available in the community. The increase in State, County and City laws and regulations has made it necessary for small portfolio landlords to no longer able to manage their own properties, and property managers are having to seek legal counsel to make sure their communication with delinquent and derelict tenants is correct.

With the proposed annual rent increase limit of 60% of the CPI or 3%, **whichever is lower,** and based upon the past few years' average CPI, we can expect not to be able to raise rents by more than 1.8% in a 12-month period. The insurance on my properties has increased over 100% in the past 3 years, even with no claims. Cost of repairs and maintenance increases each year for labor and materials. It is very unclear how the City determined that a maximum 3% or lower increase is justified.

The rental registry requirement and program is not transparent. There is no reference to even an estimate of what each unit registration will and reregistration will cost. Will I have to pay $100, $200, or $500 per unit to support this program? According to the draft ordinance, the City Council can change the fee amount whenever it wants. This is yet another situation where my property manager will have to spend more time on the management of my properties. I expect my management fee charge will be increased as a result, and my net operating income will be further reduced.

By placing a temporary freeze on raising rents after 12/15/25, while also already mandating owners to provide 12-month lease renewals, you are denying me and other

owners the right to collect any increase for 12 months. At the very least, your temporary ordinance should have allowed the rent to be increased but with a caveat that credits would have to be issued for the amount collected in excess of the permanent ordinance restriction amount.

If I were to need to sell any either of these properties any prospective owner would have to consider the property taxes associated with new valuation, insurance, number of occupied units and the various fees and restrictions associated with the property and tenants imposed by the City and State. Investors will go elsewhere unless I significantly reduce the sales price.

The City is essentially forcing devaluation of properties and taking part of my future income that has been planned for my retirement health and living expenses.

I urge the City Council to spend more thoughtful time and consideration to produce a balanced ordinance that does not ultimately force properties off the market or reduces the quality of the property the tenants are living in.

Sincerely,

Robert V. Kooyman, General Manager

Hoppy Toad Land Company L.P.

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

To whom it may concern.... which means ALL the people who are part of Santa Barbara, its' weather, its' activities, its' neighborhoods. I fear that this rent stabilization proposal has been created only involving the housing providers/tenants rather than the whole community.. It appears that the city council members are representing those to voted them into office. But shouldn't they be representing all the people of Santa Barbara?

The proposal is costing our city money and more money. Take a close look at the intricacy of administration... more ambiguity, more people to pay....more pensions to fund, etc.

Truly, it seems to me this proposal is a situation where the city takes over the rights of property owners/housing providers, yet, not the responsibilities. Please, step back and take another look. That's what the city of San Pablo, California. did a couple of weeks ago, as they put their proposal on hold to have further clarification on costs and effects.

Respectfully submitted,

Marjorie Sullivan

Dear City Council,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the city's proposed Rental Stabilization Ordinance.

The current rent freeze and this proposed ordinance have significantly hindered my ability to cover the increasing costs associated with owning a rental property in Santa Barbara. Furthermore, I believe these measures constitute a violation of both the U.S. Constitution and the California State Constitution.

I urge you to reconsider the implementation of this ordinance.

Thank you in advance,

Robert B. La Roche

--I AM A LOW-INCOME 63 year old WOMAN who acquired a 4 plex in a divorce with 75% of it financed. Over the 5 years I have owned it I have lost money every month because of all the deferred maintenance & am always needing to do repairs (built in 1938) I have kept rents stable for the benefit of keeping good tenant & try to adjust rents during turnover to minimize my losses.

Will the new program allow me to raise my rents higher than 3% during a turnover or will it allow me to raise rents more than 3% to cover the costs of these extensive repairs I am experiencing regularly? Also it seems that under this program, I will be having greater losses every year because rent can only be raised 3% even in high inflation years, which will create a greater hardship for me over time. Will there be a hardship fund to help landlords like me who are experiencing a loss?

Also I have a few friends who have illegal units with happy tenants. If they register their units will the city automatically make these units legal with no fear of reprisals? This is of great concern to them.

In general, this new program seems very unfair to owners & giving tenants an unfair advantage over the years. How can they sustain themseves when the most rent can be adjusted is 3%, even when inflation is likely to be much hgher. This makes no sense to me.

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
To the SB City Council and the Public Record,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the city's proposed rent control program. I do not have a dog in this fight as I own my house and will not be affected either way. But for the greater good of the city, I must oppose this legislation.

I asked chatgpt to do a deep research analysis on rent control. My prompt was unbiased and only said "Perform a deep research project on the efficacy of rent control. Site your sources. The output should be less than 1000 words". I have attached the summary. I hope you will read it. The data clearly should rent control drives overall rents up. The executive summary states "Rent control (or rent stabilization) – broadly, laws capping allowable rent increases – can slow rent growth for covered tenants but imposes long-term costs on housing markets . Empirical studies (from Cambridge MA to San Francisco, Berlin, Stockholm, New York, etc.) consistently show that rent caps give short-run benefit (stable rents/tenancy for incumbents) but reduce overall housing availability, depress maintenance, and eventually raise rents for new or uncovered tenants."

I have a background in economics and it is known that rent control does not work. Let alone an oppressive proposal to cap rent increases at the lower of 60% of CPI or 3%.

The decision to not take such a consequential matter to the voters also seems disingenuous. I am quite disappointed.

Thank you,

Sam

To whom it may concern-

The actions of the Santa Barbara City Council to continue to place and increase the burden of "rent control" and "tenant protection ordinances" on the backs of landlords has caused my wife and I to sell our Miramonte Condo (which was a long term rental for 30 years) and leave the Santa Barbara rental market.

Good luck and Goodbye Santa Barbara!

My Best-

Mark Goetz

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

Dear Mayor, Councilmembers and City Staff,

My name is Lori Clements and I am a property manager for a small business here in Santa Barbara. I am also a home owner and landlord for a couple of small properties. I also have worked in Real Estate for 46 years so I have seen many changes throughout the years.

I am very concerned about the process we are currently in regarding the current rent freeze, the proposed rent control and the rental registry proposal. We already have specific rules for the City of Santa Barbara with offering year leases to units more than two and with no fault just cause and how much we are allowed to increase rent per year. All this is on the landlord. I understand the reasons for this. Most of the people in Santa Barbara are small landlords and some have very reasonable rents already in place. I think as landlords we are doing as much as we can to provide clean, safe and affordable places to live. By placing more restrictions already on top of what we are required to do is putting a huge financial burden on most small landlords. We are not all large corporations or investors trying to squeeze the last bit of money out of tenants. I have witnessed that and find it horrible.

I think we need to slow down on all these changes and look at the fact that there are many levels of management here in Santa Barbara and one way does not fit all. Some of the proposed changes like the rent registry is just another cost that is unnecessary. There has to be a concrete plan to make both sides (the tenant and landlord) get a fair rental and for the landlord to make enough money to have a business and keep their properties in good order for the renters. It really takes two to make this happen. Focusing on one side only will not work overall and I think most people know this.

Thank you in advance for your consideration to all these matters.

Regards,

Lori Clements

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

Re: Strong Opposition to Proposed Permanent Rent Cap (60% of CPI or 3%, whichever lower), Rental Registry, and Rent Board - An Unconstitutional Taking and Act of Elder Abuse

Dear City Council Members,

I write as a 77-year-old lifelong Californian, born in 1949, the poor son of a farmer in Porterville, California. My mother was a school teacher. I followed in her footsteps as a school teacher myself, while working three and four jobs most of my life. I attended night school for years and earned five college degrees: a BA in Agriculture, a Master's in Agriculture, a Master's in School Counseling, a Master's in Special Education, and a Doctorate in Education. I served my country in the Army. I scrimped, saved, and lived frugally until I could afford my first home in Porterville. Through continued hard work and sacrifice, I purchased property in Santa Barbara in 1991, at the age of 42.

This city, its climate, its beauty, and yes, its property values, rewarded a lifetime of discipline and effort. Now you propose to seize a substantial portion of that reward through a permanent rent cap at the lower of 60% of the Consumer Price Index or 3%, enforced by a first-of-its-kind rental registry and a dedicated rent board. This is not governance. This is theft dressed up as compassion. It is a direct assault on my constitutional property rights and, given my age, constitutes a form of elder financial abuse.

The Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution, as well as protections in the California Constitution, prohibits the taking of private property for public use without just compensation. Rent control of this severity is a classic regulatory taking. You are not merely "regulating" rents; you are confiscating my right to the economic use and enjoyment of property I purchased with after-tax dollars earned through decades of labor. Courts have repeatedly recognized, as in Pennsylvania Coal Co. v. Mahon (1922) and under the Penn Central Transportation Co. V. New York City (1978) framework, and in California Supreme Court, precedents such as Fisher v. City of Berkeley (1984) and Kavanau v. Santa Monica Rent Control Bd. (1997), that severe rent restrictions can rise to the level of a taking. California courts have also addressed financial elder abuse under Welfare & Institutions Code §15610.30 as the wrongful taking, appropriation, or deprivation of an elder's property or income rights (see e.g., Paslay v. State Farm Gen. Ins. Co. (2016) 248 Cal.App.4th 639; Bonfigli v. Strachan (2011) 192 Cal.App.4th 1302; and Wood v. Jamison (2008) 167 Cal.App.4th 156), which this proposal directly enables by stealing my rental income. Your proposal goes far beyond any reasonable police power and into outright redistribution of wealth, from responsible property owners like me, to tenants—many of whom have not made the same lifelong sacrifices.

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
I am now an elder. My rental income from Santa Barbara property helps sustain me in retirement after a lifetime of public service as an educator. By capping my ability to adjust rents to market reality and inflation (while your own costs-insurance, taxes, endless bonds, utilities, maintenance, and regulations-continue to skyrocket), you are deliberately eroding my financial security. This is elder abuse. California's elder abuse statutes exist to protect seniors from financial exploitation and deprivation of necessary resources. Targeting the retirement income of elderly property owners through punitive rent control meets that definition in both spirit and effect. You are robbing seniors of the fruits of their lifelong labor while simultaneously driving down housing quality and supply.

Your "first-of-its-kind" rental registry and rent board will create a bureaucratic nightmare of compliance costs, privacy invasions, and arbitrary enforcement that will fall hardest on small property owners like me. Larger corporate landlords will adapt or pass costs along. Mom-and-pop owners who built this city will be crushed. The predictable results-already documented in every jurisdiction foolish enough to try this— are reduced housing supply, deteriorating properties, black markets, favoritism, and endless litigation. Santa Barbara's housing shortage will only worsen as owners convert rentals to owner-occupancy, sell their properties (rendered below market value because of you!) or simply abandon maintenance.

I did not work multiple jobs, earn five degrees, serve my country in the Army, and save for decades so that the Santa Barbara City Council could later decide my property is a public utility to be price-controlled for political gain. This proposal punishes success, thrift, and investment. It tells every young person in California that working hard, delaying gratification, and acquiring property is a sucker's game-because government will simply take the upside when you finally succeed. It reeks of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) and Communist ideology that has infiltrated the Santa Barbara City Council, pushing wealth redistribution and government control over private property that has no place in a free society.

I demand that you abandon this draft immediately. Respect private property rights. Stop this assault on elderly property owners. If you proceed, I and many others will explore every legal remedy available, including takings claims, elder abuse protections, and whatever political consequences voters choose to impose. The people who built Santa Barbara deserve better than to have their life's work expropriated by envious, vote-seeking politicians.

Sincerely,

Trace Sturgeon
Doctor of Education, Proud Santa Barbara Property Owner since 1991

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Santa Barbara City Council Members,

I respectfully ask you to consider the long-term consequences of adopting a rent cap tied to only 60% of the Consumer Price Index (CPI). While the goal of protecting tenants from rapidly rising housing costs is understandable and commendable, a permanent cap that fails to keep pace with the actual cost of owning and maintaining rental housing will create an ever-widening gap between rental income and operating expenses.

This is the effect of **compounding**, sometimes referred to as exponential growth. Each year's increase builds upon the previous year's increase. Even what appears to be a relatively small difference in annual growth rates becomes substantial over time. For example, if operating costs increase by 4% annually while allowable rent increases are limited to 2.4% (60% of CPI), the gap between costs and income grows larger every year because both figures compound.

Over the long term, this policy could have several unintended consequences for our community:

- Allowable rent increases will fail to keep pace with rising costs such as insurance, labor, utilities, property taxes, regulatory compliance, and major capital improvements.
- Property owners are likely to be forced to defer maintenance, modernization, and energy-efficiency improvements because those investments cannot reasonably be recovered.
- Older rental housing may gradually deteriorate, affecting neighborhood appearance, safety, and tenants' quality of life.
- Reduced returns may discourage investment in new rental housing, worsening Santa Barbara's existing housing shortage.
- Small, local "mom-and-pop" housing providers, who often operate with narrow margins, may be disproportionately affected.
- If rent-controlled properties become less valuable than comparable unrestricted properties, the City's future property tax base may also grow more slowly.

To enforce this proposal, the City has also suggested creating a Rent Registry, a permanent new bureaucracy estimated to cost approximately **$2 million annually**, with those costs borne by housing providers. Before creating this new entity, I respectfully ask the Council to consider several important questions:

- What measurable problem will the registry solve?
- Is there evidence that demonstrates that a rent registry reduces housing costs?
- How many additional housing units will it create?
- What safeguards will protect owners' and tenants' private information?
- Would these funds produce greater public benefit if invested directly in affordable housing, infrastructure improvements, or programs that improve housing quality?

A $2 million annual registry creates no new housing, repairs no existing housing, and does not reduce construction costs. Before imposing a permanent new tax on housing providers, the City should demonstrate that this expenditure will produce measurable improvements in affordability that could not be achieved more effectively through direct investment in housing production, rental assistance, or preservation of existing housing.

The combination of a restrictive rent cap and an expensive regulatory program will likely discourage future investment in Santa Barbara's rental housing. Developers and property owners routinely compare cities when deciding where to invest. Increasing regulatory costs while limiting future revenue growth makes Santa Barbara less attractive for the investment needed to expand our housing supply.

If the Council believes annual rent increases should be limited, a far more balanced approach would be to cap increases at **100% of CPI**, publish the allowable annual adjustment each year, and provide renters with a straightforward enforcement process. Such an approach would protect tenants from excessive increases while allowing rents to keep pace with the actual cost of providing safe, well-maintained housing. It would also eliminate the need for an expensive, ongoing registry funded by local housing providers.

I respectfully urge the Council to adopt policies that protect tenants without discouraging the investment, maintenance, and preservation of the very housing our community depends upon. The long-term health of Santa Barbara's housing stock depends on maintaining a fair balance between tenant protections and the economic realities of providing quality rental housing.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these comments.

Maire Radis

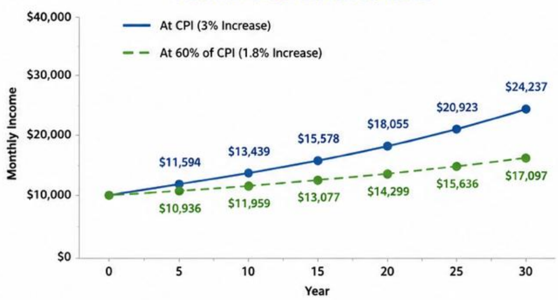
30-YEAR IMPACT OF RENT CAP: CPI vs. 60% OF CPI

Starting Property Value: $2,000,000 | Starting Monthly Income: $10,000

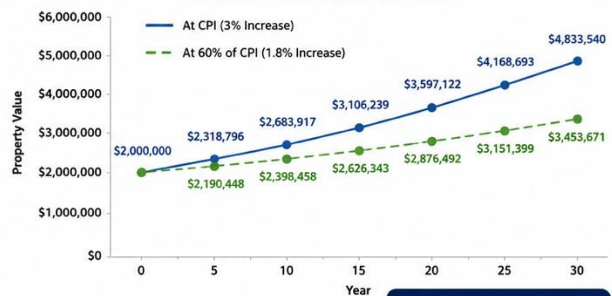
YEAR	AT CPI (Assumed 3% Annual Increase)			AT 60% OF CPI (1.8% Annual Increase)			THE GAP (CPI vs. 60% of CPI)	
	Monthly Income	Annual Income	Property Value*	Monthly Income	Annual Income	Property Value*	Annual Income Difference	Property Value Difference*
Year 0 (Today)	$10,000	$120,000	$2,000,000	$10,000	$120,000	$2,000,000	$0	$0
Year 5	$11,594	$139,128	$2,318,796	$10,936	$131,237	$2,190,448	$7,891	**$128,348**
Year 10	$13,439	$161,267	$2,683,917	$11,959	**$143,510**	$2,398,458	$17,757	**$285,459**
Year 15	$15,578	$186,932	$3,106,239	$13,077	$156,919	$2,626,343	$30,013	**$479,896**
Year 20	$18,055	$216,656	$3,597,122	$14,299	$171,588	$2,876,492	$45,068	**$720,630**
Year 25	$20,923	**$251,081**	$4,168,693	**$15,636**	$187,630	$3,151,399	$63,451	**$1,017,295**
Year 30	$24,237	**$290,846**	$4,833,540	**$17,097**	$205,162	$3,453,671	**$85,684**	**$1,379,869**

**Property value estimated to grow at the same rate as rental income. Actual property appreciation may vary.*

MONTHLY INCOME OVER 30 YEARS



PROPERTY VALUE OVER 30 YEARS



AFTER 30 YEARS: **$85,684 LESS ANNUAL INCOME** (35% less income) | **$1,379,869 LESS IN PROPERTY VALUE** (29% lower property value)

A small annual difference compounds into a **VERY LARGE GAP** over time.

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

The Hidden Cost of a 60% CPI Rent Cap

PROTECTING TENANTS TODAY SHOULD NOT SACRIFICE OUR COMMUNITY TOMORROW

SANTA BARBARA CALIFORNIA

SMALL DIFFERENCES. BIG CONSEQUENCES.

When costs rise faster than rents, the gap compounds every year—becoming dramatically larger over time.

ASSUMPTIONS

- Starting Property Value: $2,000,000
- Starting Monthly Income: $10,000
- Annual CPI (cost increases): 4.0%
- Proposed Rent Cap: 60% of CPI = 2.4%
- Time Period: 30 Years (5-year increments)

"A rent cap below the true cost of providing housing creates a growing gap that affects everyone."

THE LONG-TERM GAP: CPI vs. 60% OF CPI

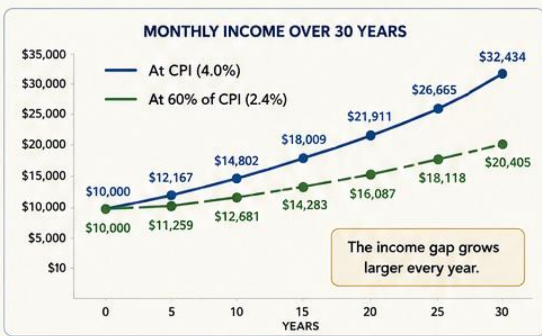
5-YEAR INCREMENTS OVER 30 YEARS

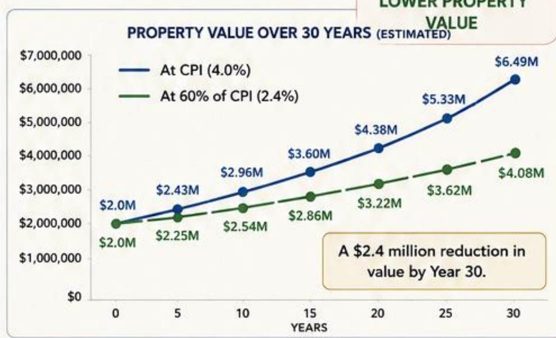
YEAR	MONTHLY INCOME AT CPI (4.0%)	MONTHLY INCOME AT 60% OF CPI (2.4%)	MONTHLY DIFFERENCE	PROPERTY VALUE AT CPI (4.0%) *	PROPERTY VALUE AT 60% OF CPI (2.4%) *
0 (Today)	$10,000	$10,000	$0	$2,000,000	$2,000,000
5	$12,167	$11,259	$908	$2,433,000	$2,252,000
10	$14,802	$12,681	$2,121	$2,960,000	$2,536,000
15	$18,009	$14,283	$3,726	$3,602,000	$2,857,000
20	$21,911	$16,087	$5,824	$4,382,000	$3,217,000
25	$26,665	$18,118	$8,547	$5,333,000	$3,624,000
30	**$32,434**	**$20,405**	**$12,029**	**$6,487,000**	**$4,081,000**

** Property value estimated based on income-producing potential. Actual values may vary.*

BY YEAR 30: $12,029 LESS INCOME EVERY MONTH ($144,348 less per year)

$2.4 MILLION LOWER PROPERTY VALUE





THE REAL-WORLD IMPACTS ON OUR COMMUNITY

DEFERRED MAINTENANCE
Owners may postpone needed repairs and upgrades they cannot afford to recover.

AGING HOUSING STOCK
Properties deteriorate faster, impacting neighborhoods and quality of life.

FEWER NEW RENTAL HOMES
Lower returns discourage new construction, worsening our housing shortage.

HURTS SMALL OWNERS
"Mom and pop" landlords with thin margins are hit the hardest.

LOWER PROPERTY VALUES
Reduced values mean slower growth in future property tax revenue.

LESS INVESTMENT IN SANTA BARBARA
More regulation and lower returns make our city less attractive to invest in housing.

A BETTER APPROACH

Cap annual rent increases AT CPI (100%), publish the maximum allowable increase each year, and provide a clear, accessible enforcement process for renters.

- Protects tenants from excessive increases
- Allows rents to keep pace with real costs
- Encourages maintenance and investment
- No costly bureaucracy or privacy risks

A SMART INVESTMENT OF PUBLIC FUNDS

$2 MILLION PER YEAR for a Rent Registry creates no new housing, repairs no existing housing, and does not reduce construction costs. Let's invest our resources where they truly make a difference.

Policies should protect tenants—without discouraging the investment, maintenance, and preservation of the housing our community depends upon.

THOUGHTFUL POLICY TODAY • STRONGER COMMUNITIES TOMORROW

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
July 6, 2026

To The Mayor and City Council:

We are against the proposed Rent Control being entertained by the city.

We believe that the state has set up adequate controls on the rental increases allowed per year.

We have kept our rents under market for years but now we are retiring and this will be our income. We need to be able to keep up with inflation at least and move our rents closer to market rates. We did not anticipate large increases in insurance and repair costs. None of our expenses are being limited by the city. Roofs wear out, tenants do damage, contractors charge a lot. Even property tax will continue to increase every year as usual.

If there is a limit, we would like to see the allowable rent increase tied to the starting point of rent because those of us who have very low rents are in a different situation than those who have kept their rents as high as possible. We would also at least like to keep up with inflation.

If we can't keep up with inflation we will have to sell our rentals, and that will be to end users who will take them off the rental market. We will be forced to invest in another area with less regulation

We agree with a quote from Jason Dominguez published today in SB Newsmakers:

"…we're a small city and we're going to spend a couple million dollars administering the program. We don't have the economy of scale … We'd be better off putting that money into direct subsidies or giving people vouchers."

Cordially,

John and Sharon Broberg

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear city council members,

I own 2 apartment buildings in Santa Barbara. I have contributed to the lawsuit against this ordinance and I will continue to fund this lawsuit.

Santa Barbara, already in budget deficit, cannot afford this assault on property ownership and housing.

VALERIE SKOWRON, **REALTOR®**

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
To the City Council,

I have been a small multifamily property owner in Santa Barbara for over 40 years. My tenant who has stayed the longest has occupied one of my apartments for over 23 years. My tenants average almost 4 years of tenancy. I can't be doing that much wrong. In fact, when my tenants leave they often tell me I have been the best landlord that they've ever had. I keep my apartments clean, safe and reasonably priced and I've never had an eviction in 40 years. I've never had a complaint against settling the security deposit account upon move out.

Last year I spent $235,000 to improve the electrical and heating system of my 100 yr old apartment building. I upgraded each sub-panel so that each tenant could benefit from clean electrical induction cooking with new ranges and an expensive heating and AC system with no visible compressor in this historic building so that my residents would benefit from clean heating and cooling, and that the City ABR would approve these modernizations to an historically designated property. Then I installed solar panels so that each tenant's clean energy usage would be offset by free power.

This doesn't look to me like an evil and greedy property owner. I am a small business owner bringing value to my purchasers. They don't move out. Aren't I doing anything right?

Can you imagine how I feel as an owner now with your punitive and restrictive stance on how I am running my small business? How can you as a City Council know what is of value and the correct decisions for my business? Have you run a small business for 40 years?

Ever since the rental market has changed in Santa Barbara, especially in the last 3 years, I have been made to feel defensive and threatened. Your stance is poisoning my relationship with my residents. Small items that I feel the residents and building would benefit from are second-guessed now. I am asking myself, do I want to continue in this atmosphere of combativeness? Yet I can't even sell my building with the instability your actions have wrought. The realtors tell me that the multifamily market has plummeted due to instability, the unknowns, and restrictions on returning a fair profit at sale.

I am terribly discouraged. It is so dismaying to have tried hard for so many years to produce a good product and then to be punished for doing so.

I am very pessimistic about what will happen to Santa Barbara's beautiful old properties in light of your one-sided decisions.

Patricia Sherman

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance

Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

We are the owner of a small rental property consisting of older houses that we have rented at below market rates for years. This ordinance unfairly targets exactly the housing stock like ours that will need maintenance and repairs that cannot be covered by artificially low rent caps. We also will need to refinance within the next few years at a higher interest rate. We are retirees who have counted on a reasonable income from these rentals and some tenants have lived here for 50 years. If this ordinance is passed then we will likely be forced to put the property up for sale for developers to build new housing. Developers are not subject to this ordinance! Unfortunately this will displace our beloved long-term tenants but without a reasonable income our only option will be to sell.

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
First, I want to thank you for taking the time to read my comments. I have owned a single family home since 1972. Shortly after purchasing it I began renting out bedrooms, primarily to students at SBCC. Over the years I probably have rented to several hundred students. I kept that property because there are five bedrooms on the ground floor and my plan was to move from my current location to that home when I could no longer handle the three flights of steps at my own home.

Now I am threatened with a penalty if I take it off the rental market - all units must come off the market. BUT my plan was to continue renting the upperbedrpp, as a source of income after my move! Your ordinance has put a serious wrinkle in a plan that I have had (and made sacrifices to complete) for perhaps as much as 30 years.

I think you should also have a different view of what a landlord is truly like - especially us "Mom and Pop's." Here are several examples. I had a tenant who could NOT pay rent - for about six months. She had been a good tenant and I just did not have the heart to evict her. She promised to pay that back rent when she got back on her feet. I accepted her promise. She then moved to Ireland - did she pay? Yes, over about a one year period she paid her back rent until I, out of the goodness of my heart, forgave the last $500.

I have at least two current tenants (and have done this many times in the past) who have indicated that they have not had salary increases at their place of employment and would be forced to move if rent was raised. I agreed to keep rent at their current rate (and in a couple of cases actually lowered their rent). Now, because I did not increase rent as I would have been able to do, I am being penalized by not being able to even raise rent to current CPI.

Another example is a tenant who complained that her door was old and there was a little section where she could see under it. I replaced her front door - almost $1,000 to get the least expensive fiber glass door at Home Depot and then almost $2,000 to install it. I cannot raise that tenant's rent one penny to recoup that cost. That situation does not motivate me, as a landlord that has always taken pride in their property, to continue doing repairs when I can't expect to eventually get a return on them.

Another example. A tenant complained that there was a leak from the roof. I spent about $15,000 replacing about 1/3 of the roof area since the roofer was not able to determine whether the roof was leaking at the place of the reported leak or whether water was entering somewhere else and running down the roof and into the unit. I cannot raise rent to help with the cost of that extensive repair. Of course you will say I can use it as a deduction on my taxes. You are right! But the cost has to be amortized and since I am 82 most likely I will be dead before I get a reasonable return on that investment.

Another example is a balcony on one of my rental units. I asked my handyman to just come and repaint the wooden areas. After inspection he determined that three of the support beams were dry rotted out. Each bean cost about $500 and you would be shocked to know that I paid almost $10,000 to do the entire repair. One of the beams that had to be replaced was dry rotted out because the tenant had put flower pots on the balcony and had allowed the water to overflow and run onto the beams. How do I begin to recoup that expense.

This isn't a part of the current ordinance proposal but I am now on the hook for repairs when a tenant moves out. You might not believe this but a very high percentage of tenants just say "take my last month's rent out of the deposit." Of course that is illegal but do you think the average landlord is going to hire an attorney to pursue the tenant who opts out in this way? The answer is "no." So, instead we send the bill itemizing move out expenses and just cross our fingers that the tenant who moved out will be ethical enough to cover the expenses.

Another example which just happened recently. SBCC's mental health department called me directly to see if I could accommodate a young lady who was desperate for a place to live. I said "yes." She promised to pay rent as soon as she got a paycheck from a position she took at the college (student position). The college paid her deposit and a partial first month's rent. She moved out at the end of the term still owing $500 in rent. She did leave the property in very nice condition so I did not have that expense but….. She has not paid her past due rent and she has now moved from the address that she gave when she moved in. I cannot follow up with her except by email and phone which she is not answering.

If I sat here longer I could probably think of other instances where I went beyond what would normally be expected of a land lord. I have owned these properties for a long time and have always been proud of be the flexible, kind, patient landlord that my tenants have both expected and appreciated. I am now being "punished" for the many times I chose not to raise rent, chose to repair something that could have gone unprepared, changed light bulbs when a tenant said she was afraid to get on a ladder and on and on.

I have two Section 8 tenants. One is in a studio that is rented for approximately $500 less than what HUD lists as appropriate rent. I have asked to be allowed to raise her rent but have been informed that because her rent is at the same rate of the other units which are not allowed to have a rent increase, I cannot bring her unit into a rate that is more in keeping with what Section 8 would pay.

I have several tenants who are aware of this ordinance and have said to me that they wish they had the courage to go to a City Council meeting to express how much they have appreciated having me as a landlord. I'm not looking for any accolades. I just think that the City Council needs to be aware that most landlords are just like me and we now feel that our good deeds over the years are being punished.

I think it is more appropriate to continue to align the decisions for Santa Barbara with those of AB1482 which had a more reasonable approach to rent raises. At least that gave us a little wiggle room so that we could work with a tenant who needed assistance.

My most sincere hope is that there are enough people who respond to this comment period with situations similar to mine that can convince you that this ordinance is not well conceived. Research has shown in numerous other communities that "rent control" or "rent stabilization" does not protect the tenant nor the landlord. Again, thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns.

Kathleen A. McGuire

Santa Barbara City resident and landlord

Noozhawk: 7/2/2026 Law of unintended or intention al consequence to proposed draconian rent control already?

La Cumbre Raod rental housing project applies to become a condo project instead. Too much of nightmare to be a landlord in this town. Don't blame them. How do you plan to punish them, for exercising their own free control over their own project and development plans?

I still cannot get my head around the fact this city council majority assumes they have the right to take private property and arbitrarily impose rights superior to the owners. Not in this America, not on this our 250th Anniversary celebrating rights, liberty and a government formed to protect thos rights and liberty from authoritarian mandate.

J. Liviingston

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

I am an owner of a triplex on the Mesa. I will be forced to sell this property if you inflict these insane restrictions on rent. I simply cannot afford to own this property and will be forced to sell it and take my investment and housing away from your city.

You are not helping the housing crisis you are making it worse!

Someone will buy my place and tear it down for a mansion near the beach and your loss will be three affordable rentals at a fair rent.

You are being unjust to everyone with these stupid and shortsighted policies.

Sincerely

Lee Wilkerson

Despite the fact that making a personal comment regarding Rent Control law (RSO) is a complete waste of time and effort I'll do my part. The majority of our City Council is made up of pure Socialists. Our free market system is being destroyed by those who see capitalism as evil. I'm not optimistic that common sense is possible. There are no successful socialistic countries on the planet but these people are too stupid to get it.

James Whilt

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Mayor Rowse and City Council Members:

More research on the negative impacts of rent control on housing availability (since the suggested Santa Barbara Rent Stabilization Ordinance seems to be bereft of such research):

"There is a growing consensus among economists that rent control decreases the availability of rental housing in both the short and long term (Kearl et al., 1979; Alston et al., 1992; Arnott, 1995; Jenkins, 2009). In the short term, landlords with property subject to rent control laws may opt to avoid these laws by either converting or redeveloping their property into other uses. This stems from specific requirements on the types of property subject to rent control embedded in the policy. For example, landlords could convert rent-controlled units into condominiums, which are usually exempt from rent control, thereby removing rental units from the market. In the long run, theory suggests there will be a decrease in the production of rental housing. This could result from rent control exerting downward pressure on market rents, making development less profitable, or developers anticipating future regulations that might subject new units to rent control. In such scenarios, developers may be deterred from building new housing altogether if investment strategies incorporate anticipated rent regulations into the valuation for new development."

Link: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1051137725000221

Also: https://naahq.org/ripple-effect-rent-regulation-and-its-effects-housing-and-neighborhood-quality

" The National Apartment Association (NAA) understands the well-meaning intentions behind rent regulation, which ostensibly aims to make housing more affordable. However, data and empirical research paint a different reality. Rent control often caps annual rent increases without accounting for rising operational costs. According to **NAA's Dollar of Rent research**, 93 cents of every rent dollar go toward operational costs, which include expenses such as repairs and maintenance. Rent regulation often fails to consider these financial obligations, consequently restricting housing providers' ability to uphold the quality of rental housing. This could potentially result in deteriorating property and rental home conditions. Additionally, the restricted ability to recoup costs or invest in improvements could lead to declining neighborhood quality."
And one more:

" Rent control laws aim to stabilize rents and provide housing stability. While they achieve these goals for a subset of tenants, they also reduce profitability for housing providers,**2** prompting some to convert rental units into condominiums, neglect maintenance, or withdraw units from the market that require significant repairs. These responses can shrink the rental supply and increase rents for unregulated units, undermining rent control's intended benefits.[3]

Additionally, rent control can discourage tenant mobility and make rental housing costlier and harder to find for new residents, especially in urban areas with restrictive land-use policies. This creates a divided housing market where long-term tenants enjoy stable, affordable rents, even if their units no longer suit their needs, while newcomers face higher rents and fewer choices."

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
To the Mayor, City Council, and City Staff:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance.

I share the City's concern about housing affordability and displacement. Santa Barbara is an extremely difficult place for renters, workers, families, and younger residents to remain. However, I am concerned that the draft ordinance relies on a policy tool that may help some existing tenants in covered units while doing little to improve overall housing affordability, and potentially worsening long-term rental supply.

The empirical research on rent stabilization is fairly consistent on this point. Rent controls can reduce rent increases for incumbent tenants in controlled units, and can reduce displacement for those tenants. But they generally do not create more housing, do not make new units affordable, and may reduce the supply, quality, and efficient use of rental housing over time.

A leading study of San Francisco's rent control expansion by Diamond, McQuade, and Qian, published in the American Economic Review, found that rent control helped covered tenants remain in place, but also caused landlords to reduce rental housing supply by approximately 15%, in part through conversion to owner-occupancy or redevelopment. The authors concluded that while rent control benefited incumbent tenants, it likely raised market rents in the long run and undermined the broader affordability goals of the policy.

Similarly, Autor, Palmer, and Pathak's study of Cambridge, Massachusetts, published in the Journal of Political Economy, found that stringent rent control muted landlord investment incentives and affected the allocation and condition of housing. A broader review of the empirical literature by Kholodilin in the Journal of Housing Economics concludes that rent controls are effective at slowing rents in controlled dwellings, but are also associated with adverse effects including reduced supply, reduced quality, reduced mobility, and misallocation.

That distinction is important. A policy that protects some existing tenants is not the same thing as a policy that produces more affordable housing. As drafted, this ordinance appears to function primarily as an incumbent-tenant stabilization measure. It does not create deed-restricted affordable housing, increase housing production, reduce construction costs, streamline approvals, or address the structural shortage of housing in Santa Barbara.

I also believe the City should be candid about its own role in creating the conditions that now make rent stabilization politically attractive. For many years, Santa Barbara has taken what could fairly be described as an obstructionist or highly restrictive position toward new, denser housing. Through zoning constraints, discretionary review, lengthy approvals, neighborhood opposition, and resistance to multifamily density, the City has helped suppress housing production relative to demand. That underproduction is a central cause of high rents. It would be poor policy to restrict supply for decades and then respond to the resulting scarcity primarily by regulating prices on the limited rental stock that remains.

I urge the City not to treat rent stabilization as a substitute for housing production. If the Council proceeds with some form of tenant protection, it should be paired with a much more aggressive pro-housing agenda: by-right multifamily approvals in appropriate areas, meaningful upzoning near transit and services, faster permitting, objective design standards, reduced discretionary barriers, incentives for deed-restricted affordable units, and policies that make it easier rather than harder to add rental housing.

Santa Barbara's housing crisis is fundamentally a supply, entitlement, and affordability problem. Rent stabilization may provide short-term relief to some tenants, but the research suggests it is unlikely to produce broader affordability and may create harmful secondary effects if not paired with substantial new housing production. I respectfully ask the City to reconsider whether this ordinance, as drafted, addresses the root causes of the problem, or whether it mainly manages the symptoms of a housing shortage the City has helped create.

Respectfully submitted,
Tim Gorter

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Some history

until recently I owned 25 rental units in the city spread across 8 properties but sold them as I was losing freedom to run my business and could see further restrictions on the horizon.(which is now what is happening)

My approach threw the years (starting in 1977) was to never raise rents until a unit became vacant, even though some tenants stayed for 12 years. That way a tenant would feel secure in their unit as long as they remained.

Under this new program one can no longer do this.

As a result of my selling the 8 properties (typically to out of town buyers) at least 6 rental units were removed from the market as some owners chose to convert the properties that had 3 and 2 units back to single family homes which they then occupied

I know for a fact that many folks will get out of the landlord business because of the unfair restriction this ordinance will put on them, not to mention their desire not to have the city mandate how to run their business. Many others will choose not to rent a granny flat or guest house because of the burden the city has placed on them for removing a difficult tenant. This will have the immediate and long term fact that rental units will significantly decrease in the city. Is this what you want?

Furthermore financially a landlord they will each year lose more of their rental income as one can only raise rent a fraction of inflation and in years of say 9% inflation they will lose 6%, meanwhile tenant will gain that each year. As the years role by landlords will need to beg their tenants to take them out to dinner. Can you please explain to us how the disparity is in any way fair and sustainable?

Housing is less of a necessity than food. I don't see you putting limits on grocery store prices, why are you picking on landlords?

Insurance, utilities, service workers and cost of materials are rising faster than inflation, how can a landlord stay in business under these new terms? It won't be long before owners will start renting units out as storage.

Please let us know publicly how any of this is going to help the rental market in santa barbara as I struggle to understand your logic?

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear City Counsel,

I understand there is a draft Residential Rent Stabilization ordinance (Chapter 26.90).

I'm from Santa Barbara and I currently live in Santa Barbara.

I've observed rent control ordinances in city of Santa Monica and Los Angeles over the last 30 years.

In a small City like Santa Barbara, rent control would be an absolute disaster. I've traveled to 109 countries in the last 10 years. Unlike those countries or Los Angeles broadly, my view is in Santa Barbara is the nicest city in the world. In order to continue to be the nicest city in the world, by definition, SB must have a high tax base and deploy those resources effectively. In order to have a high tax base it needs expensive real estate and people spending money to generate sales and use taxes. The real estate therefore must be market driven.

1. Charlie Munger got it right when he said "Show me the incentive and I'll show you the outcome." Santa Barbara should endeavor to attract people with resources because they are willing and able to invest in the community directly such as real estate and through higher levels of purchasing activity. But they need to be incentwd by free market returns to do so.

2. People with resources can choose where they want to live, and they will want to live where the buildings are maintained flawlessly and here they can make a reasonable risk adjusted return. Only free market rental buildings are maintained. Rent controlled buildings are not maintained. Rent control buildings do not make a reasonable risk adjusted return and so there is a downward spiral in terms of maintenance.

It is no coincidence that the nicest places in the world also have the most expensive real estate both to purchase and rent. I would look to Beverly Hills, Aspen, and Palm Beach as peers in the United States.

Santa Barbara beats all of them on the weather and environment. None of them have beaches and mountains. Let's not fall into the downward spiral that comes with government over regulation that creates the wrong incentives for free market players like investors to keep our city the nicest in the world.

Best,

Jason Peterson

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Mayor, City Council, and Staff,

I am a downtown Santa Barbara resident writing to urge the Council to reject the Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance (SBMC Chapter 26.90) and to redirect the city's energy toward what actually lowers rents over time: building more housing at every level.

I share the Council's underlying concern. Housing costs here are a real burden, and residents deserve affordable options. But rent control is one of the most thoroughly studied policies and the evidence consistently shows it does not solve affordability. Instead, it tends to shrink and degrade the very rental housing stock we need.

A review of more than 100 empirical studies (Kholodilin) found that rent control consistently produces reduced housing supply, fewer construction starts, lower rental quality, and reduced mobility. Jason Furman, who chaired President Obama's Council of Economic Advisers, summarized the professional consensus bluntly when he said, "rent control has been about as disgraced as any policy in the economic tool kit."

The maintenance problem worries me most. When allowable returns are capped, housing providers lose the ability to reinvest in their buildings. Research and on-the-ground experience in New York both show the result: deferred maintenance, more housing-code violations, and a meaningful share of buildings operating at a loss. A policy meant to protect tenants ends up leaving them in deteriorating homes.

Consider an alternative approach. Austin chose to build, and it worked. Starting in 2015 the city reformed zoning, sped up permitting, and reduced parking requirements. Then, over ~10 years, it added roughly 120,000 housing units: a 30% increase, more than three times the national rate. The result was that inflation-adjusted rents in the city of Austin fell 19% from 2021 to 2025, even as rents rose nationally. Crucially, the biggest declines were in older, non-luxury Class C buildings (down about 11%) that serve lower-income renters. Austin didn't cap prices and instead built enough that prices came down on their own, across every tier.

That is the spirit I'd love to see Santa Barbara pursue. We have real opportunities sitting in plain sight:

- Infill on the surface parking lots downtown, where land is already served by infrastructure, transit, and would support downtown businesses.

- Commercial-to-residential, adaptive-reuse conversions, and replacing older, low density buildings with newer higher density options.
- Development at all price points - affordable and market-rate alike. New higher-end units create vacancy chains that open up more attainable homes downstream.

I want Santa Barbara to be a vibrant, growing city where young families, like mine, can put down roots. Rent control risks the opposite over the medium to long term: driving away the new development we need and letting our existing housing stock decay. I urge the Council to set Chapter 26.90 aside and instead double down on creating new supply with infill, conversions, and a permitting process built to say yes.

Thank you for your time and your service to our city.

Sincerely,
Sean Forster

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance

Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

Hi I'm Kevin Young I own a 6-plex in Santa Barbara City and a 4 plex in Santa Maria - that's all I own and it's my main source of income, I'm 69 and retired. My rents have always been under market ($2850 for a 2BR 1Bath on lower Barranca near the beach) and so how fair is it that Im stuck with low rents during rent control when landlords with high market rents get to be stuck with their high market rents. I believe I should be able to get market rents like everyone else because these are my buildings (not yours). I should not be penalized for the City not building enough housing. I have had recent expenses like a roof replacement ($80,000), electric upgrade ($83,000), kitchen and bath remodels ($30,000 each)... and I'm still stuck with low market rents? Now I'm raising rents as much as I can yearly, based on the CPI, to try to get closer to market rents before you guys unfairly lock me into low market rents while others get to be locked into higher market rents.

Kevin Young

Greetings.

The proposed Rent Control Ordinance is highly misguided and appears to be a "feel-good" regulation. While it might "feel-good" to pass Rent Control, it will have the opposite effect and negatively impact Santa Barbara.

Negative impacts you can expect:

Landlords will no longer improve and renovate existing properties - or do the bare minimum to keep it habitable.

Properties will no longer turn over as tenants stop relocating - reducing inventory of housing.

Existing tenants will sublet apartments at much higher rates - illegally. (see New York city problem list)

Rental properties will be removed from rental inventory when they become vacant.

Rental properties will become housing for kids and grandchildren and other family members.

Builders will no longer build rental properties.

Rentals will become condo conversions.

Ralph W. Nobbe

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

I am a renter here in Santa Barbara and I am strongly opposed to the rent stabilization ordinance. It seems the drafters are either completely financially and economically illiterate, or they simply hope to bring about the complete decimation of the rental market in the city. It's unclear which. Thousands of small landlords would be foolish to continue renting out units that will very quickly (possibly in a year or two), be financially unviable. If the hope here is to kill the local economy and decrease rental stock 10 fold, then good job--if the goal is something else, then please do us all a favor and take a basic economics class, look at other places with draconian RSO's and their outcomes, and stop legislating until you've done the above.

Thank you

Hillary Slevin

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Strong Opposition to the Proposed Residential Rent Stabilization Ordinance (Chapter 26.90) – Public Comment**

Dear Santa Barbara City Council and Rent Stabilization Staff,

My name is Judy Braun. Along with my siblings, I am a co-owner and active administrator of a 20-unit apartment complex at 1423 Park Place in Santa Barbara (Lower Eastside/East Beach area). This is a family-owned property that we manage with care. We are not corporate landlords or large developers — we are hardworking owners who have invested in providing decent, lower-cost housing for our tenants, many of whom are teachers, service workers, and long-time community members.

I am writing to strongly oppose the draft Residential Rent Stabilization ordinance. While I understand the intent is to help renters facing high housing costs, this proposal will have the opposite effect. It is already making it harder for responsible, small-scale property owners like us to maintain and provide affordable housing — and it will ultimately lead to higher rents, fewer units, and deteriorating properties.

The proposed rent increase cap (no more than 60% of the annual CPI increase, or 3%, whichever is less) does not come close to covering our rising costs. Insurance premiums, property taxes, repairs, utilities, labor, and compliance burdens all climb much faster. As the article in the *Santa Barbara Current* by Loy Beardsmore accurately points out, this creates a "slow bleed" for conscientious owners who actually fix things and keep buildings livable. We cannot absorb endless losses while still maintaining quality housing.

The bureaucratic requirements make this even worse. Every unit must be registered with invasive personal and financial details, under penalty of perjury for exemptions, with one-sided enforcement that strips basic property rights (no rent collection, no evictions for non-payment, etc.) for even minor compliance issues. The "fair return" petition process and capital improvement pass-through limits are so cumbersome and restrictive that most small owners will simply give up. Major repairs like roofs or electrical upgrades stop making sense financially, which means buildings deteriorate.

This directly contradicts the stated goals of the ordinance. Good, responsible landlords who provide lower-cost housing are punished, while the added costs, risks, and paperwork discourage investment and maintenance. In the long run, supply shrinks as owners sell or exit the rental business (especially under the restrictive Ellis Act changes). We've seen this pattern in other cities: fewer apartments overall, black-market rents, and the people who need housing the most end up with worse options. It is ironic — and tragic — that a policy sold as compassion for renters will make housing less available and more expensive for future tenants.

My family and I work hard to be good stewards of this property. We coordinate payroll, bookkeeping, compliance, and maintenance thoughtfully. Regulations like this make it increasingly difficult to continue offering stable, well-maintained housing without passing on even higher costs or reducing services. Small, local owners like us are the ones who truly keep rents more reasonable in practice — not distant corporations.

I urge you to reject this ordinance. Santa Barbara deserves housing policies based on economic reality, not ideology that pits neighbors against each other. Please protect property rights, encourage maintenance and new supply, and support the small owners who form the backbone of our rental market.

Thank you for considering my comments. I am available for further discussion and encourage you to listen to other small property owners before the final vote.

Sincerely,

Judy Braun

Dear Council Members,

I am very much opposed to the new proposed Rent Stabilization Ordinance. Besides being grossly unfair to property owners, it promises to sharply reduce available rental properties over time. Investors large and small will avoid buying, building or retaining rental properties in favor of safer investments. The ordinance will end up harming renters in the long run by eliminating the apartments renters are seeking. Please reconsider this proposal.

Sincerely,

James Corcoran

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to voice my opinion about the proposed rent control measure being considered for Santa Barbara.

I think it is a terrible idea and I am appalled that our city council can make such sweeping financial decisions for Santa Barbara citizens and property owners!

My wife and I have a duplex that we have owned for more that 20 years. We have always kept up with maintenance issues and kept the rents low.

Since we are both retired, the income from our duplex contributes to our modest retirement income.

Like many other property owners in Santa Barbara, these proposed measures will make it much more difficult (if not impossible) to maintain our property to the level we consider appropriate.

As you know, all aspects of property ownership (insurance, property taxes, maintenance, etc.) are increasing at an alarming rate. To expect property owners to bear the burden of these increases, exclusive of all other citizens, is clearly prejudicial and wrong. The proposed rent increase cap does not even cover the CPI for our area!

Also, the forecasted cost of over $2,000,000 per year with an already strained Santa Barbara budget is financially irresponsible.

Thank you,

Ray Johansen, Santa Barbara resident for over 55 years.

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

This is just a terrible idea. It creates more unending bureaucracy and will ultimately decrease the total number of rental units in Santa Barbara as small landlords will be driven out of the market. Whether you look at San Francisco, NYC or Sweden, there has never been a successful rent control program and the results are clear. It leads to less supply, deferred maintenance and a robust black market.

It will have the complete opposite effect of its positive intentions. Properity owners should be able to do whatever they want with their property ..tbis is America after all and if the city wants to provide more housing then built it don't over regulate the limited supply that we have. It will only lead to negative outcomes.

Thank you,

Dr. Steven Sinclair

The subject term is better titled rent control. Rent control doesn't seem to have worked in other cities as I've experienced. Evidence to this effect is readily available if council members would avail themselves to the data.

I understand the need for affordable housing, but this is definitely not the way to provide that. This will drive property owners to sell and actually have the reverse effect of what the city council is trying to accomplish. It will limit supply and increase rent in Santa Barbara. The council members who voted to approve this ordinance are miss directed and misinformed. They are reacting to a definite need of our population, but unfortunately in the wrong way. Please do not support this ordinance and vote against its approval as it will further destroy the ability for working class individuals and families to find adequate housing and the quality of life in the city of Santa Barbara.

Landlords not being afforded full CPI adjustments from renters as an offset to income loss is purely insane and completely irresponsible.. Shame on the three ladies and Oscar for voting in favor of this. This totally fails basic economics 101 and will result in the wholesale sell-out of mom and pop type multi family residential property owners to big companies with no pride of ownership or stake in Santa Barbara per se.

Gary Simpson

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Mayor Rowse and Esteemed Members of the Santa Barbara City Council,

I inherited my parent's house in town about 3 1/2 years ago, and have been considering taking in a tenant to help offset maintenance costs, as I live alone and have several rooms in the house which I don't really use. However, the upcoming vote on the proposition to severely limit rent increases for all tenants has given me serious reservations about doing so. I have seen maintenance costs rise a good amount over the past 3 1/2 years, and if rent is frozen, I could face the possibility of losing money as those maintenance costs continue to rise. Since I live alone, I have actually been putting off some maintenance and repair work on the house for some time due to the costs, but would undoubtedly be asked by any tenants that I took in to make sure those issues are taken care of.

I can understand your position on wanting a rent freeze, as I know that there are large companies which have been price-gouging renters who live in multi-unit apartment complexes. But I would ask you to consider that there are many of us who are simply trying to break even by renting out to one or two tenants that would be adversely affected by a rent freeze. Please don't punish people like us by enacting such a one-size-fits-all blanket law.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Eric C. Heidner

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear council members,

Please vote against the rent control and rental registry. I am a retired nurse who inherited 2 multi family properties from my mom. Luckily I had enough money to pay the taxes. Unfortunately because it has been so difficult to maintain the properties, conflicting regulations, COVID, difficult building and planning codes, they were in serious disrepair. After 4 years of working with the building department, one of the buildings is still vacant waiting on the city to allow the project to be completed. My mom just didn't have the bandwidth to manage all the regulations and so let the property decline.

I am faced with astronomical construction costs just to upgrade the leaking sewer and unsafe electrical not to mention water and garbage increases. The only insurance I can get is 400% higher in cost with minimal coverage.

I could have chosen to do nothing and enjoy my own retirement, but I didn't.

I stayed in the game because I do care about Santa Barbara and providing safe housing.

I believe there are much better solutions than this rent control and registry. I vote and you can clearly see my intentions by the money and time I am investing into this community.

Ask not what else I can give but what you, the city council can do better to serve our community. Vote No on the rental registry and increased rent control.

VALERIE SKOWRON, **REALTOR®**

I am very upset at this potential new law. What you need to fix is the property tax on all properties in sabra barbara. If the cost for my loan as well as the property tax were not so outrageous I could rent my place for less than I bought this for me but at 82 my family wants me to live near them.

You need to look at the real reason the rents are so high and change these prices. It's not because the landlord is trying to make a killing. Just that they want to make at the very least a little over all their costs.

Rita murdoch

Comments on the Proposed Rent Stabilization Ordinance

"Affordability" has become a nationwide concern. Housing, food and energy costs have all increased. Sometimes faster than incomes. Solutions to these issues should generally be dealt with on a macro level, meaning the federal and state governments acting to bring down prices, or increasing available disposable incomes. Action is needed. That includes a more equitable and progressive income tax. That said, the notion of foisting the responsibility for lower housing costs within the City of Santa Barbara on the backs of one group of housing providers is a terrible idea. It is unfair and inequitable. Why this group? Shouldn't all taxpaying citizens bear this responsibility?

Who Will This Law Help?

The city does not state how many individuals or families will benefit from the law. Why should a high-income individual or family receive this benefit? They don't need it, but they are in an apartment priced below market rents. Shouldn't those "in need" be specifically targeted for assistance? It was reported in the June 17, 2026 Santa Barbara Independent that "Hundreds of Santa Barbara County Residents at Severe Risk of Losing Their Homes". "SEVERE RISK". The housing Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program will be out of money by September 30, — with no new funding anticipated. The EHV participants have been qualified as needy. They have been vetted and cannot make the rent payment without this assistance. THIS is the group the Council should be focused on! Not simply using a helicopter to drop monies on a large group of renters without any idea if they need the assistance or not! So silly.

Do We Want Big Government?

The proposed law will create a large bureaucracy costing millions of dollars a year to control and regulate the local housing providers. Housing providers will need to come forth and beg for increases in excess of an inflexible formula any time additional (major) repairs are needed or improvements to the property are made. The council has suggested attorneys be assigned, that subpoenas can be issued — all to regulate the rent of an apartment — while there is already a state law in effect that limits rent increases and creates strict standards before a resident can be removed from a rental. That isn't good enough for this city? A large, complicated, expensive and slow-moving monster of a bureaucracy is a bad idea and bad for the community as a whole.

Falling Tax Base?

The proposed limits will cause a deterioration in the housing stock that will, over time, decrease the values of the rentals and single-family homes. This will reduce tax revenues to the city. No reasonably prudent person will invest in their rental property if a reasonable rate of return is either refused or is very difficult and costly to obtain (See "Big Government" above). Consequently, expect over time the deterioration of rental buildings. With very limited rent increases allowed, few if any will move out of their below market rate apartment. With no need to find new renters, and no reasonable expectation of a return on monies spent, property owners will simply not spend any monies on their properties. No need for painting the buildings, or maintaining landscaping or really doing anything related to "curb appeal". This will have an effect on nearby single-family properties, as who wants to live next to a run-down property! Consequently, values will fall and along with that property tax revenues as well. Naturally, when the income that can be collected from a rental property rises slower than expenses, then the "net income" will fall. The fair market value of the rental is directly related to its net income. As net income drops, so does the property's value. (The proposed law is effectively causing a "taking" of the rental property).

Not A Fair Return?

Rent increases of 60% of CPI with a cap of 3% is unfair and disincentivizes housing providers from investing in their properties. Costs (expenses) are increasing much faster than the three percent (3%) cap. The current inflation rate is 4.2%. Why would anyone invest with such limited ability to increase income? A prudent investor can buy a ten-year Treasury bill paying 4.5% interest. It is totally safe, no hassles, and free from California income tax! It is well established that there is an insurance crisis. The FAIR plan has announced a 29% increase in its insurance rates. Property taxes increase at a two percent annual rate, automatically. Edison has increased its electric rates by 13%. The City of Santa Barbara has called for water and sewer rates to increase by 5%, 10% and 10% for years 2025, 2026 and 2027 respectively. The gas company has announced rate increases of 12% for 2025. The City trash rates are increasing by 4.15% and 5.2% in 2026 and 2027 respectively. Three percent (3%)! That's all for housing providers to pass on? How is that fair? Even the Council seems to think three percent is low. At a recent meeting, when discussing monies in lieu of providing affordable housing, the Council insisted that the amount to be paid in lieu be indexed to the California Construction Cost Index! For years 2022–2025 that index increased at an average of 5.2%! Based upon information available, it seems that a maximum rent increase of CPI plus two percent, with a maximum annual increase of not more than 6% would be fair to all parties.

Privacy Concerns?

The proposed law will require revealing significant private and confidential information of the rental property owners, while those receiving the benefit will be masked! Where are we heading? The property class have a vested interest in the health and well-being of the city. They are invested! Tenants, by their nature, are transient. While both get a vote, the fact that the owners must open their books while the beneficiaries remain anonymous seems unfair and troubling. Shouldn't the tenants receiving what is effectively a subsidy have to provide proof of need? Why is City Council indiscriminately giving one party's money to another without proof of need?

Why Is City Council Making This Decision?

This proposed law is fraught with unknowns. The cost of litigation. The cost if the city loses the litigation. The long-term effect on the housing stock and tax revenues. The inequities as to who needs versus who receives this "gift." Is this really what the majority of voters want? The City Council is split 4–3 on this proposed law. This issue should be placed on the November ballot and, with all information made available, let the citizens vote on this. Let the people speak.

Can We All Work Together?

I have never seen a more combative and contentious relationship between property owners and renters than I have recently witnessed in the City of Santa Barbara. This is a top down issue. Several members of City Council seem to have painted housing providers as villains, and residents as victims. That is unfair and unhealthy for the community. The rhetoric and attitude toward housing providers is uncalled for. All parties are suffering from the current affordability/inflationary issues. There is no winner with chaos. There are acceptable semi-solutions for those with actual needs. But the notion that it's "unfair" that someone cannot afford to rent or own a home in Santa Barbara is nonsense. Santa Barbara is a magical coastal city with high demand. It's no one's fault that it's expensive. Perhaps the most troubling thing I have witnessed has been pro rent control citizens who have spoken at various Council meetings, who have been loud, angry, belligerent, and threatening to the three minority Council members who are opposed to this law as drafted. The fact that no Council member who is in support of rent control has taken the initiative to stand up and tell those people that their behavior is inappropriate and unacceptable is troubling. The fact the majority says nothing meeting after meeting implies to me they think that it is ok that "their people" talk like that to fellow Council members. Disappointing. Is that the Santa Barbara way?

Respectfully,

James Bridy

Santa Barbara's **budget deficit** continues to grow despite revenue sources **Measure C** (2017) and **Measure I** (2024), which were sold to voters as ways to close the budget gap, and which between them bring in **over $45 million annually**. This extra revenue was supposed to fund critical infrastructure, public safety, and essential city services. But despite these funds, the city is still grappling with increasing deficits due to rising costs — particularly in pensions, salaries, and infrastructure maintenance. As we approach the 2026 mayoral race, one thing is clear: the candidates are divided on the best way to handle the city's financial future.

Measure C and Measure I–Never Enough

- **Kristen Sneddon**, one of the mayoral candidates, has consistently advocated using **Measure C and Measure I revenue** for **low-income housing** and for reducing the general fund deficit. However, affordable housing projects take properties off the property tax rolls, reducing one of the city's largest revenue sources. **Property tax is our top revenue source at 39%, for a total of $53 million in revenue in 2024.**

- **Mayor Randy Rowse** has taken a more traditional approach, focusing on controlling spending and thereby avoiding future tax increases. Rowse has been vocal in his opposition to using **reserve funds** for recurring expenses, preferring fiscal restraint and ensuring long-term sustainability of the city's finances

State Street Spending: An Ongoing Challenge

Santa Barbara's **State Street revitalization efforts** have **cost taxpayers millions** in additional spending, contributing further to the **growing deficit**:

State Street Master Plan: $780,000 for consultant fees to develop the plan. The city eventually paid **$570,000** to **MIG, Inc.** before terminating the contract. The remaining **$343,250** in original funding was allocated to **Moule & Polyzoides** to complete the work.

Sidewalk Extensions (Pedlets): $528,170 spent on the project to extend sidewalks on the 500 block of State Street. This is a trial run for eventual hardscaping of extended sidewalks in that block, as a way to make it difficult for State Street to ever be re-opened for the purpose it served for the last 150 years: as our major traffic artery.

State Street Undercrossing

The city's share of this project was **$6.8 million** out of the total **$11 million**, allocated for improving pedestrian access and safety.

Miscellaneous Improvements

Other smaller projects, such as **flowerpots**, **lighting**, and **street maintenance**, have added additional costs of **$500,000 - $2 million**.

This brings the **total spending** on **State Street revitalization** (including studies, consultants, and improvements) to **$12–16 million**.

Additional Costs Contributing to the Deficit

- **Employee Payouts**: The city made **payouts totaling $1.3 million** for **separation agreements** with department heads, including **$500,000** for the **Rob Dayton retirement settlement**. (I hope you remember why this happened)
- **Housing Trust Fund Allocations**: The City Council has **allocated $4 million** in **funds** to the **Housing Trust Fund** over the past two years to support **affordable housing** projects, despite concerns about taking properties off the tax rolls.
- **Immigrant Services**: Santa Barbara has spent approximately **$500,000** on **immigrant-related services**, including legal aid, healthcare, and shelters for undocumented individuals.

Total Additional Costs: ~$5.8 million

Another Proposed Tax Increase

This Tuesday, during a City Council meeting, members discussed yet another proposal to raise taxes, this time, the Property Transfer Tax (PTT) to help close the budget gap. Somehow, reducing expenses is never up for discussion.

Here's What You Need to Know

- City Council is currently debating a measure on the ballot to raise the Property Transfer Tax. This would increase costs for property buyers and sellers in Santa Barbara, and create another revenue stream for the city's general fund.

- Mayor **Randy Rowse** voted against this idea. He has consistently opposed raising taxes on Santa Barbara residents and believes the city should focus on controlling spending rather than burdening taxpayers with more taxes.
- Consultant fees were incurred to help develop this Property Transfer Tax proposal, and additional staff time and resources are being used to research, prepare, and put it on the ballot. While this may be presented as a revenue solution, it's important to acknowledge the costs involved in getting these measures to the public and taxpayers will ultimately bear those costs.
- Rowse made it clear at the Tuesday meeting that **he would not go to the taxpayers again for another tax increase.** This reinforces his commitment to fiscal discipline and a stance that prioritizes budget control over revenue hikes.

The Costs of Consultant Fees and Staff Time

- Consultants are hired for their expertise in creating tax increase measures like the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) and Property Transfer Tax (PTA) proposals. These consultant contracts cost the city thousands of dollars — money that could otherwise reduce the growing budget deficit.
- Additionally, the staff time spent researching, preparing, and analyzing these measures is another hidden cost. While staff work to develop tax proposals that might close the budget gap, their work does not directly translate to tangible solutions for the deficit.
- Councilmember Sneddon has supported using these tax measures as part of her approach to fund critical services. But her stance comes with additional costs that taxpayers will need to bear — both through higher taxes and through the staff and consultant resources used to prepare these measures.

But Wait; That's Not All

And before you think we're done tallying up the financial impact on Santa Barbara taxpayers — *think again.*

The City Council majority didn't just increase sales tax and contemplate property related taxes — it also recently implemented a host of new rent related regulations, including:

- Rent Freeze
- Rent Registry
- Rent Stabilization
- Mandatory Lease Renewal or pay three times the rent to the tenant to move out, **yet that was challenged and is now "only" two times the rent.**

Rather than being isolated policy discussions, these initiatives came while the city was simultaneously raising fees on essential utilities such as:

- Water
- Sewer
- Trash
- Clean Energy rates

All these costs — *combined with coerced rent limits* — put additional financial pressure on local households and landlords alike. **According to a news release from the Santa Barbara Rental Property Association (March 3, 2026)**, these measures collectively have had cumulative economic effects on housing providers and renters, contributing to a climate where:

- Operating costs for rental properties have increased,
- The burden of utility and service charges has risen,
- The local tax and regulatory environment has become more challenging for working families and small property owners.

Councilmember Sneddon has been leading the efforts for rent freeze, rent stabilization, and rental registry. These initiatives could cost an additional **$6 million annually** to implement and run, further burdening taxpayers and property owners.

The **Santa Barbara Rental Property Association (SBRPA)** will be filing **legal action** against the city to invalidate the temporary rent freeze and halt the work on

the permanent rent stabilization program. They argue that rent control violates private property rights and impedes economic reality, with landlords unable to earn a Fair Market Return on their investments.
SBRPA_News_Release_3_3_2026.pdf

In other words: the city hasn't just increased taxes and fees — it has layered on regulations that impact everyday cost of living and local economic stability.

When you add these burdens to the millions in taxpayerfunded spending and proposed tax increases, the picture becomes even more significant:

Not only has the city spent tens of millions on projects and payouts,
Not only is the budget still in deficit despite new revenue streams,
But residents are also facing higher utility bills, complex new rent controls, and greater cost pressure across the board.

This is a multifaceted economic attack on homeowners, renters, and small businesses by a City Council majority, led by Sneddon, that refuses to look at spending cuts first.

Total Waste of Spending So Far of Just These Few Items

Expenditure Category	Amount
State Street Master Plan (Consultants) An additional **$343,250** was allocated to **Moule & Polyzoides** to complete the work.	**$780,000** (paid $570,000) $343,250
Sidewalk Extensions (Pedlets)	**$528,170**
State Street Undercrossing (City share)	**$6.8 million**
Miscellaneous Improvements (lighting, flower pots, green bike path, removal of green bike path, etc.)	**$500,000 - $2 million**
Employee Payouts	**$1.3 million**
Housing Trust Fund Allocations	**$4 million**
Immigrant Services	**$500,000**
Rent Freeze, Rent Control, Rent Stabilization, Rent Registry (Annually)	**$6 million**

Estimated Waste: $15–21 million

Final Thoughts

Santa Barbara's growing deficit is a key issue in the mayoral and council race. Mayor Rowse takes the traditional approach–control costs before raising prices. Increase city revenue by growing the economic pie, not by raising the rates. Kristen Sneddon believes that taxpayers are an endless piggy bank for whatever social justice program is currently at the top of the Democratic Party's list.

Remember, last year's budget vote was 4/3, which I'm pretty sure has never happened before; budget approvals are usually unanimous. The consequences of that approved budget turned out even worse than we thought. The three that voted against last year's budget were Rowse, Friedman, and Jordan.

These three members opposed dipping into reserve funds to cover operating expenses and opposed the budget being adopted in a way that might deepen future fiscal strain. Guess what? ***They were right.***

Here's a side-by-side comparison between the extreme proposals from the Democratic Socialists in Los Angeles (as referenced in the *New York Post* article) and the current or potential policy ideas that are being discussed or implemented in Santa Barbara. This will allow you to see how much of the LA plan might already be reflected in Santa Barbara's housing, economics, and public policy discussions.

1. **Seizing Privately Owned Housing to Convert to Public/Social Housing:**

LA Proposal

- *Goal:* Use **eminent domain** to seize private property (housing) and convert it to **public or social housing**.
- **Vision: Government ownership** of a significant portion of private housing stock as a step toward eliminating private profit from housing.

Santa Barbara

- *Current Efforts:*
- Santa Barbara has **no policy** aimed at expropriating private housing via eminent domain. However, there are ongoing discussions about **rent control** and **landlord regulation**.
- Recent **temporary rent freezes** passed by the City Council have sparked debates about **regulating rents** to prevent exploitation in the market. (noozhawk.com)

Question:

Is Santa Barbara's growing regulation of rents and housing markets a step toward more radical control over private housing in the future?

2. **Public Takeover of Essential Industries (e.g., grocery, restaurants, internet, etc.)**

LA Proposal

- *Goal: Nationalize essential industries such as grocery stores, restaurants, and internet* to ensure equitable access and eliminate corporate profit motives.

- *Vision:* The *public ownership* model for sectors that serve *basic needs* (food, services, communication, etc.).

Santa Barbara Current Efforts:

There are **no clear plans** for **municipal ownership of grocery stores** or **internet providers**. However, **public ownership** of utilities like **water** and **electricity** has been discussed in the context of sustainability and environmental policy. (noozhawk.com)

Discussions about **public transportation**, **affordable housing**, and **environmental regulations** may hint at future moves toward **increased public management** of essential resources.

Question:
Could the focus on environmental sustainability and climate change in Santa Barbara lead to a broader move toward public control of essential industries?

3. **Decommissioning Carceral Facilities (Jails) and Replacing with Alternatives**

LA Proposal

- *Goal:* Decommission the **Men's Central Jail** and **replace it with unarmed alternatives** for dealing with crime, such as **mental health crisis responders** and **community-based solutions**.
- **Vision:** Reduce reliance on **incarceration** and shift to **public health-centered approaches**.

Santa Barbara **Current Efforts:**

Santa Barbara has been engaged in discussions about **decarceration**, **mental health crisis intervention**, and **restorative justice**.

Some local activists and groups, such as the **Santa Barbara Democratic Socialists**, have supported **mental health crisis teams** as alternatives to armed police response. (noozhawk.com)

Question:

Is Santa Barbara slowly moving toward decriminalizing certain offenses and replacing traditional policing with more health and community-based responses?

4. **100% Renewable Energy by 2035 & Fossil Fuel Elimination**

LA Proposal

Goal: **Complete fossil fuel elimination** by 2035, transitioning to **100% renewable energy** sources.

- **Vision:** A future where **all energy** is clean, sustainable, and publicly controlled.

Santa Barbara Current Efforts:

Santa Barbara has adopted aggressive **climate action** policies, including **100% renewable energy by 2030** as part of its **Climate Action Plan**. (santabarbaraca.gov)

Local policies are actively working toward **clean energy transitions**, including **solar power**, **energy efficiency initiatives**, and **carbon neutrality**.

Question:

Is Santa Barbara leading the way with climate action, or could its bold goals be just the beginning of even more aggressive energy reforms down the line?

5. **Free Public Transportation (Buses, Trains, Bike Shares)**

LA Proposal

- **Goal: Make all public transportation free** (including buses, trains, and bike shares) to ensure **equitable access** to transit.
- **Vision:** Free transit as part of a broader effort to reduce private car ownership and reliance on fossil fuels.

Santa Barbara Current Efforts:

Santa Barbara has not yet implemented **free public transportation**, but **discussions about expanding transportation access** (e.g., **free bus rides for students** and **discounted transit options**) are in play. (santabarbaratransit.com)

Public transit improvements and **accessibility** are prioritized to help reduce traffic congestion and promote **sustainability**.

Question:

Could Santa Barbara move toward a model where all public transportation becomes free to reduce congestion and promote environmental goals?

6. **Vacancy Tax on Empty Housing Units**

LA Proposal

- *Goal: Impose a vacancy tax* on empty housing units to force property owners to either rent or sell their unused properties.
- **Vision:** A response to **housing scarcity** and **gentrification** by taxing unused properties that contribute to the housing crisis.

Santa Barbara Current Efforts:

While **vacancy taxes** are not currently enacted in Santa Barbara, **the concept has been discussed** in the context of increasing **affordable housing** and addressing **speculation**. (noozhawk.com)

Question:

Could a vacancy tax be the next step to address housing shortages and curb real estate speculation in Santa Barbara?

7. **Universal Rent Control**

LA Proposal

- *Goal: Implement universal rent control* statewide to **protect tenants** and reduce housing inequality.
- **Vision:** A future where **rent control is universally applied** to all housing in the state.

Santa Barbara Current Efforts:

Rent control has been a hot topic in Santa Barbara for years. **Rent stabilization measures** are being considered to curb skyrocketing rents. In 2026, the city passed a **temporary rent freeze** to help stabilize rents while longer-term solutions were drafted.

Question:

Is rent control truly the solution to Santa Barbara's housing crisis, or could it have unintended consequences on new housing development?

8. **Ban on Unhosted Short-Term Rentals (e.g., Airbnb)**

LA Proposal

- *Goal: Ban all unhosted short-term rentals* to prevent them from taking housing off the market and exacerbating the housing crisis.
- **Vision:** A move to **prioritize long-term housing** and reduce speculative real estate activity.

Santa Barbara Current Efforts:

Santa Barbara has already implemented **stringent regulations on short-term rentals** (e.g., Airbnb) to preserve housing availability for residents. The city is tightening rules on unhosted rentals. (noozhawk.com)

Question:

Could Santa Barbara's short-term rental laws evolve into a full ban on unhosted units? What would be the impact on tourism and local residents?

Conclusion:

Is Santa Barbara Already Heading Down This Path?

After reading through the list of policies being advocated by Democratic Socialists in Los Angeles, we must ask: How far are these ideas from becoming reality in Santa Barbara? While some of these ideas are already being discussed, such as rent control, vacancy taxes, and public transportation reforms, the transition to more radical steps like public ownership of utilities or complete fossil fuel elimination is a long-term debate — but one that is clearly growing in momentum.

Santa Barbara has shown some signs of "progressive" policy development, but how far does this push go? Are these progressive ideas truly leading us toward a more socialist future, or are they a natural evolution of policy aimed at addressing an extreme housing crisis? These are the questions that will shape the city's future.

How far do you think it will go?

Their full list in the *California/NY Post* **article**

- **Seizing privately owned housing** using eminent domain to seize private property and convert to public/social housing
- **Build city-owned municipal enterprises and expropriate corporations** in essential industries (grocery, restaurants, internet, etc.)
- **Decommission Men's Central Jail** and don't replace with any carceral facilities
- **Execute shift to 100% renewable energy by 2035** — complete fossil fuel elimination in 11 years
- **Make all public transportation free** (buses, trains, bike share)
- **Publicly acquire and operate all energy systems** — full public takeover of utilities
- **Reclaim private and public golf courses** via zoning/legislative means for housing/parks
- **Divest public pension investments from war profiteers, defense contractors, and fossil fuel companies**
- **Replace armed police with unarmed alternatives** for traffic enforcement and mental health crises
- **End all contracts between public agencies and corporations profiting from war/fossil fuels** (including Metro's contracts)
- **Ban all unhosted short-term rentals** (Airbnb, etc.)
- **Prosecute and permanently decertify all cops who kill**
- **Noncitizen voting in all local elections**
- **Vacancy tax on empty housing units**
- **Universal rent control statewide**
- **Automatic rent freezes and eviction moratoriums** with any state of emergency
- **Decriminalize all drug use** and fund safe injection sites
- **Restore voting rights for all former felons**

- **End all means-testing** for child development programs

In the debate over rent regulation, Santa Barbara officials often focus on landlords as the driver of rising housing costs. What receives far less attention is the City's own role in steadily increasing the fixed, unavoidable costs, of operating rental housing.

The data cited here is not anecdotal. It comes directly from a Public Records Act Request (PRAR) I submitted to the City of Santa Barbara seeking documentation of all City-approved increases over the past ten years. The records produced include water, sewer, trash, and electricity-related charges approved by City Council and passed through to ratepayers. Taken together, they provide a clear, City-sourced record of how essential housing costs have risen—year after year—without any CPI cap.

Water: Increases That Far Exceed Proposed Rent Cap

Between 2015 and 2025, the City of Santa Barbara significantly raised water charges. City records show the *water usage rate for the first tier increased 44.29 percent* over that period. Even more striking, the *mandatory monthly water service charge—paid regardless of use—increased 70.33 percent.*

Over the same decade, *California CPI rose 41.97 percent.* Under the rent-stabilization framework now being discussed locally—*60 percent of CPI*—allowable increases would have totaled only *25.18 percent.*

Put simply, the City raised its own water charges nearly *three times faster* than the increases it now proposes to allow landlords.

Even in a single recent year, the disparity is clear. From FY 2024 to FY 2025, City utility charges rose roughly *6.6 percent*, while CPI-U West increased only *2.6 percent*. These increases were approved *automatically*, without any CPI cap or affordability analysis.

Sewer: A Quiet Doubling Over Ten Years

Sewer rates reveal an even more striking pattern.

In just one year—FY 2024 to FY 2025—the City approved a *9.5 percent increase* to both the fixed sewer charge per dwelling unit and the volumetric sewer rate. That increase was not an outlier. It was the continuation of a decade of compounding increases.

Over roughly the past ten years, Santa Barbara's *sewer charges have effectively doubled.* The fixed monthly sewer charge per dwelling unit rose from approximately *$18–$19 per month to nearly $39*, an increase of *more than 100 percent.* At the same time, the volumetric sewer rate climbed from roughly *$3.20–$3.40 per HCF to about $5.95, an increase of 80 to 90 percent.*

For a small four-unit property with one meter, this translates into a *95 to 105 percent increase in the total sewer bill* for the same level of service.

A sewer bill that once ran about $135–$145 per month now costs $270–$285 per month, without any increase in usage.

These increases were approved year after year, passed directly to ratepayers, and never tied to CPI. If the City had limited its own sewer increases to 60 percent of CPI, as now proposed for landlords, much of this doubling would never have occurred.

Trash: Automatically Passed Through

Trash and recycling follow the same logic. For a small four-unit property using a *1.5-yard dumpster with weekly pickup*, City-approved trash rates have increased by approximately *71 percent since FY 2017–18.*

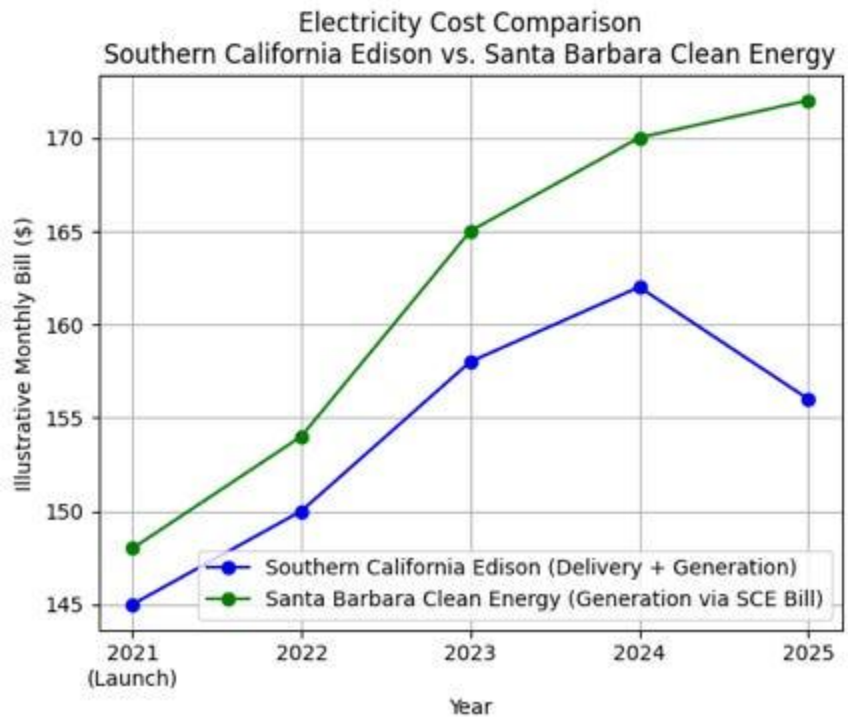
Trash and recycling are bundled under the City's franchise system. When rates rise, they are passed through automatically—no CPI test, no affordability analysis, and no discussion about whether the service provider should absorb the cost.

Electricity: A Cost the City Doesn't Bill—but Still Controls

While the City does not issue the electric bill, it launched *Santa Barbara Clean Energy (SBCE)* in late 2021, replacing Southern California Edison's generation charge with City-selected power procurement. Edison continues to bill for delivery; SBCE replaces only the generation portion on the same Edison bill.

SBCE does *not* add a separate City utility bill or surcharge on top of Edison delivery charges. However, depending on the year and plan, SBCE generation rates have often been *higher than Edison's default supply,* particularly for higher renewable options.

SBCE has not existed long enough to produce a ten-year history such as water, sewer, and trash. But since launch, the pattern is clear: *electricity costs have changed and risen outside the landlord's control,* just like other essential utilities.



When Utilities Are Legally Defined as "Rent"

In Santa Barbara's rent-stabilization materials and draft ordinance language, *"rent" is defined broadly* to include not only the base payment for occupancy but also *housing services.* Those housing services are explicitly defined to include *water, sewer, refuse removal, electricity, utilities, and utility infrastructure,* along with items such as *parking, furniture, and other services provided in connection with the tenancy.*

The City's materials go further. They state that *reducing housing services—or requiring a tenant to begin paying for utilities directly—is treated as a rent increase unless the base rent is reduced to offset the cost.*

In other words, a *landlord cannot shift rising utility costs out of bundled rent arrangements without triggering a rent violation.*

This matters because many multi-unit properties—especially older buildings with one meter—include water, sewer, trash, and sometimes electricity in rent by necessity, not by choice. Under the City's own framework, those utilities are *legally considered part of rent.*

The Policy Conflict

Santa Barbara raises water, sewer, trash, and electricity costs through repeated, uncapped increases. At the same time, the City is moving toward policies that would *cap rent increases far below those same cost increases,* while legally defining the utilities themselves as part of regulated rent.

State law already caps rent increases regardless of why costs rise. Local draft ordinances go further, restricting a landlord's ability to recover utility costs even as those costs continue to climb.

The result is a one-way ratchet:

City-imposed costs rise freely, while the ability to recover them is constrained—by the City's own definitions.

Why This Matters

Housing does not operate in a vacuum. Water, sewer, trash, and electricity are essential services. They are controlled or approved by government entities and increased year after year without CPI caps.

If CPI is the standard for fairness, it must apply in both directions.

Because when essential costs double—and rent recovery is capped—the outcome is not affordability. It is deferred maintenance, disinvestment, and fewer housing providers willing or able to remain in the system.

That reality deserves to be part of the conversation.

Rents didn't surge by chance. Elected officials shaped the incentives, constrained supply, and targeted older housing while exempting newer developments — then blamed the market for the results.

Santa Barbara's January 13th, City Council meeting on rental policy was long, crowded, and emotionally charged. By the end of the night, the Council voted 4–3 to advance a temporary rent increase moratorium and new restrictions tied to Ellis Act evictions under Agenda Item 14. Coverage from Noozhawk and the Santa Barbara Independent focused on the split vote, the packed chambers, and the intensity on both sides.

But the most important question coming out of that meeting is not whether rents should be frozen for a year.

It is this: Why did rents spike in the first place — and who caused it?

The answer is uncomfortable for those in power, because the record points squarely at elected officials and the policies they chose.

What the Council Actually Did

The Council voted 4–3 to introduce a temporary rent freeze, generally locking rents at December 16, 2025 levels while staff works toward a permanent rent stabilization ordinance expected later in 2026. It failed to receive the five votes required to take effect immediately, meaning it must return for adoption and would begin 30 days later if approved again.

At the same meeting, the Council also advanced Ellis Act amendments — again by the same 4–3 vote — imposing:

- An all-or-nothing withdrawal rule, and
- A five-year re-rental ban on properties removed from the rental market. Even during the meeting, councilmembers acknowledged that portions of this package still lack clarity and require rewriting.

Taken together, these votes sent a clear signal to property owners: more restrictions are coming, flexibility is shrinking, and risk is increasing.

Public Comment: Deflection Instead of Accountability

Public comment on Item 14 was extensive. But rather than confronting the policy record, several speakers turned their attention to personal attacks — naming

Mayor **Randy Rowse** and Councilmember **Eric Friedman**, questioning motives instead of debating substance.

Readers should watch the meeting video themselves, beginning around the 4:52 mark, and decide whether the rhetoric elevated public understanding — or distracted from the real issue: why rents surged under the watch of current leadership.

Personal attacks are easy. Accountability is harder.

Here Is the Part No One Wants to Say Out Loud

Rents didn't spike *despite* government action. They spiked *because* of it.

For years, California lawmakers — joined by local officials — have:

- Restricted rent increases,
- Expanded eviction controls,
- Added procedural mandates,
- Publicly signaled more regulation was coming, and
- Failed to meaningfully increase housing supply.

When elected officials cap future rent growth, landlords respond rationally: they raise rents sooner, particularly at turnover. When eviction rules tighten, owners price in risk. When councils telegraph stricter controls ahead, owners act defensively.

This is not ideology. It is incentive-driven behavior.

Policy didn't stop rent increases — it front-loaded them.

Geography, History, and Structural Scarcity

Santa Barbara's housing pressure did not appear overnight. The city is physically constrained by the Pacific Ocean to the south and the Santa Ynez Mountains to the north, with little room to expand outward. Once the city filled in, there was no next frontier.

Historically, water availability also shaped growth decisions. For decades, drought cycles and limited supply reinforced a planning culture that assumed growth must be constrained. While desalination has since changed the city's water outlook, those earlier limits helped cement long-standing assumptions about scale, density, and population.

Scarcity here is structural — not a recent market failure.

This Was Not an Accident — It Was a Choice

Santa Barbara did not stumble into this reality. Influential preservationist ***Pearl Chase*** urged the city to "maintain its integrity and maintain its standards," shaping architectural review and land-use policy for generations. Those standards created a city admired worldwide — and permanently limited how much housing could be built.

Former Mayor ***Sheila Lodge*** documented these choices explicitly in her book, **Santa Barbara: An Uncommonplace American Town**: *How Thoughtful Planning Shaped a City*. In it, Lodge traces how Santa Barbara's leaders and voters repeatedly chose limits — on height, density, scale, and growth — to preserve the city's character and avoid becoming what she described as a "commonplace" American town.

Central to Lodge's account is the concept of carrying capacity: the idea that Santa Barbara was never intended to grow indefinitely. Planning decisions effectively capped how many people the city could reasonably accommodate. These limits were debated openly and embraced locally as a way to protect quality of life — even as they constrained population growth and housing supply.

In other words, Santa Barbara's size — and its housing scarcity — was shaped intentionally.

Economists Have Been Warning About This for Years

Economists are not confused about what is happening. **Peter Rupert** of the University of California, Santa Barbara Economics Department has consistently explained that when demand rises and supply is constrained, prices rise — and that rent caps do not fix that imbalance.

Rent freezes and stabilization schemes do not create housing. They redistribute scarcity, discourage investment, and shrink supply over time.

Officials were warned. They proceeded anyway.

The Discrimination No One Wants to Defend

Here is where the policy record becomes impossible to ignore.

Rent control and freezes target older properties while exempting newer ones, particularly large multi-family developments built after 1995. In Santa Barbara, that means many small locally owned “mom-and-pop” rentals are regulated — while larger, newer, often corporate-owned complexes are untouched.

This is not accidental. State law is written this way, and local policy follows it.

The effect is predictable:

- Older properties face capped revenue and rising costs
- Small owners are squeezed
- Large, exempt landlords gain market power
- Pressure builds to sell

Which raises a fair question: Is this the point?

Do elected officials want older properties priced out, forcing small owners to sell so large players can buy, demolish, and “build, baby, build” — at far higher rents?

If not, they should explain why policy outcomes align so neatly with that result.

So, Who Caused the Rent Spikes?

Let’s stop pretending this is a mystery.

Rents spiked because:

- Officials restricted supply without replacing it
- Officials capped future increases, encouraging front-loaded hikes
- Officials concentrated regulation on older housing
- Officials exempted newer, larger developments
- Officials created uncertainty that rewards scale and punishes small ownership.

That is not the market acting alone.
That is policy driving behavior.

Elected officials caused the conditions that led to rent spikes — then responded by blaming the symptoms they created.

Watch It Yourself

The City Council meeting video is publicly available on YouTube.
To review the public-comment segment discussed here:

- Go to Item 14
- Begin around 4:52:00

Judge the rhetoric — and the record — for yourself.

[City Council - January 13, 2026 - YouTube]

One Last Question We Can't Ignore

After watching that segment, readers should ask one final question.

If a speaker uses the phrase *"pale and male"* when addressing white men on the City Council, is that racist language? And if so, why did no one in the chamber object — particularly elected officials who routinely speak about respect, equity, and inclusion?

Public officials should expect criticism. But standards should apply evenly. If racially charged language directed at any other group would be condemned, silence in this case sends a message of selective outrage.

That is not equity. It is a double standard.

Final Thought

If Santa Barbara wants lower rents, it cannot keep doing the same thing and demanding different results. Geography and history impose limits — but policy choices decide who bears the cost.

Right now, those costs are being driven by elected officials — and paid by tenants and small property owners alike.

Until that is acknowledged, rent spikes will continue — no matter how many freezes are passed after the fact.

As Santa Barbara City Council prepares to vote *tonight* on a **rent freeze**, **rent stabilization**, and a **mandatory rent registry**, the public discussion has focused almost entirely on rents. What has received far less attention is the City's own long-standing policy on cost recovery — and how sharply it conflicts with the framework now being proposed for housing.

On **Monday**, I received the City's response to a **Public Records Act Request (PRAR)** seeking **ten years of City-imposed fee and utility increases**. Because City Council is scheduled to vote **tonight (Tuesday)**, this column focuses on **one illustrative year** from that response to show how the City applies cost recovery to itself. A follow-up column will present the full ten-year analysis in detail.

Given the timing of tonight's vote, it was important to put this information before the public — and City Council — now.

Under the proposal before Council, allowable rent increases would be capped at **60 percent of CPI**, even as inflation, insurance, utilities, and City-imposed fees, continue to rise. The premise is simple: housing providers should absorb a substantial portion of rising costs in the name of affordability.

That premise is difficult to reconcile with how the City of Santa Barbara manages its own finances.

What the City Says — in its Own Words

Over the past decade, the City has repeatedly adopted and reaffirmed a clear policy position: **when municipal costs rise, fees and rates must rise as well**.

City resolutions state that fees exist to *"defray the cost of providing programs and services"* and that funds needed to cover rising expenses *"can and should be obtained by setting fees and charges."* Inflation and CPI are explicitly cited as valid justifications for these increases, and in some cases fee schedules are indexed to CPI automatically.

There is no language in these policies about *partial* recovery. There is no suggestion that the City should absorb rising costs as a public good. There is no cap limiting recovery to a fraction of inflation.

In the City's own energy program, Santa Barbara Clean Energy, the principle is even more explicit: rates must achieve *"revenue sufficiency,"* meaning they are designed to recover **all** program expenses, debt service, and reserves.

In short, when City Hall's costs rise, **full cost recovery is treated as essential**.

What Residents Have Experienced

Residents do not need to read resolutions to understand how this policy works in practice. They experience it every month.

Trash and recycling charges rise.

Water rates rise.

Sewer and wastewater fees rise.

Energy charges rise.

These increases are often annual, frequently compounded, and routinely justified by inflation, labor costs, pension obligations, and operating expenses. They are **not capped** at 60 percent of CPI. They are **not partially absorbed**. They are passed through because the City considers doing otherwise fiscally irresponsible.

One Year Makes the Contradiction Unmistakable

The City's PRAR response documents ten years of fee and utility increases imposed on residents. Because City Council is voting tonight, this column highlights **one year** from that record.

From **FY24 to FY25**, a representative set of City-imposed utility charges increased **6.6 percent**, compared with **2.6 percent CPI-U West** over the same period.

Chart: One-Year City Utility Increases vs. CPI (Illustrative Year)

City Utility Increases vs. CPI – FY24 to FY25

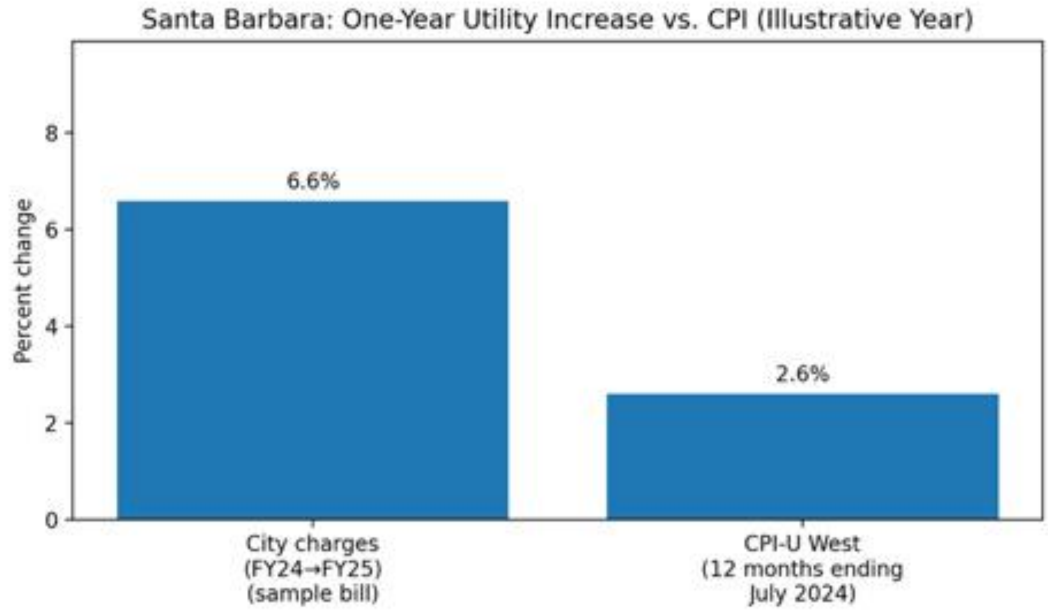


Chart notes:

- Based on a representative monthly bill (trash base + one 35-gallon cart, water at 4 HCF, wastewater at the single-family cap of 8 HCF).
- **Not included:** voter-approved tax increases — the **1% sales tax under Measure C** and the **½-cent sales tax under Measure I** — which further increased the cost of living but are separate from utility rates and fee schedules.
- A follow-up column will examine **all ten years** of City increases.
- If the City had applied the same **60-percent-of-CPI** standard it now proposes for housing providers, these increases would not have been permitted.
-

The Rent Proposal

Against this backdrop, the City is now proposing a fundamentally different standard for housing.

Under the rent stabilization framework, housing providers would be limited to recovering only **60 percent of CPI**, even as many of their largest expenses rise faster than inflation. Insurance premiums, in particular, have surged well beyond

CPI in recent years. Maintenance, construction labor, and compliance costs, have done the same.

Layered on top of that are the City's own rising fees and utility charges — costs landlords pay in the same way residents do.

The proposal does not dispute that these costs are real. It simply requires that a substantial portion of them be absorbed.

A Basic Question the City Must Answer Tonight

Before voting, City Council should answer a straightforward but critical question:

Is the 60-percent cap based on national CPI, or California regional CPI — the same CPI the City relies on when raising fees and utility rates on residents?

This distinction matters. California regional CPI measures have often exceeded national inflation, particularly for energy, utilities, and housing-related costs. The City has relied on these higher regional CPI figures when justifying its own increases.

If the City is using **regional CPI** to justify full cost recovery for itself but limiting housing providers to **only 60 percent of that same CPI**, the inconsistency is even more pronounced.

A Final Challenge to Council

This debate is often framed as a moral choice between affordability and profit. But the question before Council tonight is not whether affordability matters.

It does.

The question is whether a policy that **selectively denies cost recovery** is economically sustainable — or fair.

If limiting cost recovery to 60 percent of inflation is sound public policy, why has the City never applied that standard to its own fees, rates, and utilities?

Note: *This highlights one year from a ten-year Public Records Act response received Monday to inform the public ahead of tonight's City Council vote. A follow-up column will present the full ten-year analysis, including cumulative City-imposed increases, CPI comparisons, and the compounded impact on Santa Barbara residents.*

When Cost Recovery Applies to City Hall but Not to Housing Providers

As Santa Barbara considers new rental regulations, the City's own budget documents highlight a central issue of fairness: When the city faces rising costs, those cost increases justify increasing taxes and fees by the same amount. But when people in the rental housing business face increasing costs–some of those costs imposed by the city–they are told they can only recover a portion of the costs of doing business. This amounts to a forced charitable contribution by landlords to tenants. Which may be good politics in an election year–there are more tenants than landlords–but in the long run it will cause landlords to exit the rental business, further reducing the stock of rental housing.

As Santa Barbara's housing debate intensifies, it increasingly rests on a simple assertion: landlords have "no right" to consider their costs when setting rents. We are told rents are determined solely by market conditions, and that rising expenses — even those imposed by the government — must be absorbed.

That assertion becomes difficult to reconcile with how the City of Santa Barbara manages its own finances.

When City costs increase, fees, taxes, and rates are adjusted accordingly. Water, sewer, and trash rates rise. Business license fees and service charges are recalibrated. These changes are routinely justified as necessary to sustain services and maintain fiscal stability.

At the same time, property owners who pay these costs are told that cost recovery has no relevance to rent. This tension now sits at the center of the City's discussion around a rental registry and expanded rent regulation.

The issue is not philosophical. It is whether the City applies the same principles of fairness to its own business and to the businesses of citizens.

The City's Budget Reality: Cost Recovery as Policy

In late 2025, City staff presented the Finance Committee with a comprehensive set of budget options to address Santa Barbara's structural deficit. That document — **Attachment 5** to the agenda — outlines hundreds of potential revenue and cost-recovery measures.

The list assigns fiscal estimates to specific actions and reflects a clear operating assumption: when costs rise, cost recovery mechanisms must follow.

Among the options identified by staff are:

- Increasing engineering service charges to full cost recovery, estimated at **$5.4 million annually**
- Raising the Utility User Tax, projected to generate **$3.2 million per year**
- Expanding paid parking and penalties, totaling **more than $2.4 million annually**
- Expanding Transient Occupancy Tax revenue from short-term rentals, estimated at **$2.5 million**
- Updating planning, building, and environmental review fees to better reflect actual service costs

Complete list here: presentation.xlsx

These examples alone account for more than **$20 million annually**, and they represent only a portion of the total list. The broader takeaway is clear: cost recovery is not an exception in City policy — it is the norm.

That context matters, particularly as the City considers policies that restrict how housing providers respond to cost increases imposed by those same municipal decisions.

Rental Housing as a Regulated Business

The City already regulates rental housing as a business activity. Property owners are required to hold business licenses, pay business taxes, comply with inspections, and meet ongoing reporting and regulatory requirements.

In most respects, rental housing is treated as a regulated commercial enterprise.

However, when the discussion turns to pricing, the framework changes. Cost considerations that are recognized in other regulated activities are set aside. Landlords are expected to absorb rising expenses indefinitely, even when those expenses stem directly from City-approved rate increases or mandates.

This distinction is particularly significant because many of the largest costs landlords face are not discretionary. Water, sewer, and trash services are City-controlled or City-approved monopolies. Property owners cannot seek alternative providers or renegotiate terms. When rates increase, payment is mandatory.

Yet within the current policy debate, these non-optional costs are treated as immaterial to rent. That's not how the City evaluates its own fiscal obligations.

Rental Registries and Compliance Costs

Rental registries are often characterized as administrative tools. In practice, they create ongoing compliance obligations: data submission, updates, deadlines, enforcement exposure, and potential penalties. For many owners, compliance requires professional assistance.

These are recurring operational costs that accumulate over time, layered on top of utilities, taxes, insurance, and maintenance. They are real, predictable, and measurable.

Tenant Outcomes in Practice

Rent control and rental registries are commonly presented as beneficial to tenants. However, experience in California cities with long-standing rent regulation provides important warnings.

In **Los Angeles**, **Santa Monica**, and **Berkeley**, rent control has existed for decades. The outcomes are well documented.

First, most renters are excluded. Rent control typically applies only to older housing, leaving a majority of rental units exempt. New renters, younger residents, and working families often receive none of the benefits rent control supposedly provides.

Second, housing mobility declines in a rent-controlled market. Because of their artificially low rents, tenants remain in units longer than they otherwise would, reducing turnover and availability. When units circulate less frequently, options narrow and pressure increases elsewhere in the market.

Third, supply and quality are affected. When rent adjustments are constrained but operating costs continue to rise, owners respond by deferring maintenance, postponing improvements, or reducing reinvestment. Some exit the rental market altogether.

These outcomes are not unique to any one city. They reflect consistent responses to sustained cost pressures under similar regulatory conditions.

The 1995 Cutoff and Uneven Application

Rent control in California does not apply to housing built after 1995. This exemption stems from the **Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act**, which restricts rent control on new construction and preserves vacancy decontrol.

The intent was to avoid discouraging new housing production. The practical effect has been the creation of a two-tier rental system: older units subject to regulation and newer units fully exempt.

Tenants in newer housing — often younger residents and newcomers — face higher rents and fewer protections. While lawful, this structure results in uneven treatment across the rental population.

Considering Santa Barbara's Context

Supporters of expanded regulation often argue that Santa Barbara is distinct. The policy tools under discussion, however, are not.

Santa Barbara already faces rising utility rates, increasing regulatory costs, limited housing availability, and a structural budget gap acknowledged by City staff. Introducing additional layers of regulation that will require more expensive city staff for enforcement is just adding to the city's financial problems, not solving them.

Accountability lies with City Council

It's important to be clear about accountability. City staff and department administrators implement policy; they do not create it. Every fee increase, rate adjustment, tax proposal, and regulatory expansion discussed here comes from a vote of the City Council. Those decisions have already increased the underlying costs of operating rental housing, contributing to rent increases over time. With several council members now seeking higher office, it is worth noting that these outcomes are not abstract — they are the direct result of how those council members voted.

Everywhere Santa Barbara residents turn, the message is the same: *pay more.*

At the grocery store, it's bag fees and bottle deposits. At home, it's water, sewer, trash, parking, and permit fees. Each increase is described as "modest." "Necessary." "Unavoidable."

But taken together, they form something else entirely — a **parallel tax system built on fees instead of votes**.

Fees, however, don't fix systems.

They fund them.

The Checkout Line Was the Warning

California once trusted people to reuse. Paper grocery bags were free — and reused again at home, even repurposed to cover schoolbooks and protect textbooks, year after year. Bottles were returned to local stores for cash. No fees at checkout. No bureaucracy. No shortfalls.

That system worked because responsibility was clear.

Then it changed.

Bag Fees and Bottle Deposits

How "Responsibility" Became a Revenue

Today, consumers pay:

- **25¢ per paper bag** starting in 2026
- **5¢ or 10¢ bottle deposits** at checkout

We're told it's about behavior change. But the bag fee doesn't go to environmental cleanup. It doesn't go to recycling programs. It doesn't go to schools. Retailers keep it — under a state mandate.

Bottle deposits are marketed as "refundable," but in reality, consumers rarely get the full amount back. Redemption centers pay by weight, not per container. Many centers have closed. Long lines and strict sorting rules turn a "deposit" into a *partial reimbursement* at best.

Unclaimed deposits don't disappear. They quietly prop up the system.

What was once a manufacturer responsibility has become **consumer-funded compliance**.

From grocery bags to water bills, the message is the same: pay more, ask later.

Please don't forget: your elected officials put a charge on grocery retailers for grocery carts taken off their property which leads to **higher cost per item you purchase!**

Utilities: Where the Real Money Is

That same fee logic now dominates local government.

In Santa Barbara, water, sewer, and trash rates have climbed sharply — often **well above CPI**. Each increase is justified in isolation: infrastructure, staffing, compliance, reserves.

But rate studies tell a clearer story. Roughly **half of recent water rate increases** are tied to **operations and maintenance** — the category that includes staffing, benefits, pensions, overtime, and administrative overhead. Infrastructure matters, but it isn't the whole picture.

Once government takes control of a system, it must fund:

1. The service
2. The administration
3. The enforcement
4. The future pension obligation

Those costs never go down.

And they don't stop at the city.

County government adds its own layers. The state adds more. Each level raises fees to fund permanent payrolls with guaranteed benefits.

You can't raise every cost and freeze the one people use to survive them.

So, Who Gets the Money?

That's the question residents are never encouraged to ask.

Fees and rate increases don't just pay for pipes, trucks, or programs. They pay for:

- Salaries
- Overtime
- Health benefits
- Pensions
- Consultants
- Compliance staff
- Growing administrative layers

At the city, county, and state level, residents fund a **large, permanent public workforce** whose compensation is protected by formulas and contracts — while households are told to absorb higher bills quietly.

This isn't accidental. Once a fee exists, it rarely sunsets. Once a bureaucracy exists, it must be funded forever.

Now Apply That Logic to Housing

This is where the contradiction becomes impossible to ignore.

A four-member City Council majority — **Meghan Harmon**, **Wendy Santamaria**, **Kristen Sneddon,** and **Oscar Gutierrez** — is pushing rent registry, rent stabilization, and in some cases retroactive limits.

Their argument is simple: Rent increases must be capped — often at **60% of CPI** — to "protect" tenants from rising costs.

But that standard applies **only to housing**.

The same council votes to approve:

- Utility rate increases above CPI
- New and higher fees above CPI
- Parking increases above CPI
- Permit and regulatory costs above CPI
- No 60% cap

- No hardship exemption.
- No acknowledgment of cumulative impact.

Government raises costs first — then tells housing providers they can't respond.

Caps for landlords, escalators for government — that's the real affordability crisis.

A Forgotten Piece of History

There's another detail missing from this debate — and it matters.

Before 2005, serving on Santa Barbara City Council was **never intended to be a professional salaried position**.

Councilmembers earned about *$800 per month* — roughly *$9,600 per year.* (Now, this is how much each receives just for their car allowance.)
The mayor earned about *$1,200 per month* — roughly *$14,400 per year.*

Public service. Not a career path.

That changed when voters approved a charter amendment tying council pay to **Area Median Income (AMI)**:

- Councilmembers: **80% of AMI**
- Mayor: **100% of AMI**
- Adjusted automatically every year

No annual vote. No debate. The formula runs on autopilot.

Today, councilmembers earn roughly *$74,000 per year,* with benefits and retirement contributions on top.

At the County Level

Restraint is even looser. In 2025, the Board of Supervisors approved a *nearly 50% pay increase,* pushing salaries toward **$171,000 per year** — by vote.

No CPI cap.

No retroactive freeze.

No moral lecture about "affordability."

The Double Standard

If retroactive rent freezes are fair, why wouldn't retroactive wage freezes be fair?

If landlords must absorb:

- Government-driven utility hikes
- State-mandated fees
- Rising insurance
- Regulatory compliance

Why are government wages and benefits shielded from the same restraint?

Why is cost-shifting labeled "greed" when it comes to privately owned rental housing — but labeled "governance" everywhere else?

This isn't about opposing tenant protections. It's about *consistency.*

The Real Problem That Won't Go Away

Santa Barbara doesn't have a landlord problem. It has a *government cost problem.*

Every fee is defended as "small."

Every rate hike is framed as "necessary."
Together, they erode affordability far faster than rent ever could.

If 60% of CPI is the "ethical standard," then City Hall should live by that standard.

If restraint is good policy, City Hall should be the first to restrain itself.

Santa Barbara's rent stabilization push raises hard questions about cost, mobility, and long-term outcomes.

Tuesday night's Santa Barbara City Council vote was framed as compassion. But compassion without outcomes is not a solution—it is a sentiment. By a 4–3 vote, the Council chose to move forward with a rent stabilization framework that expands regulation, enforcement, and permanent administrative control over housing, while leaving unanswered the most important question of all: **how does this help people get ahead?**

That question was never meaningfully addressed.

What Tuesday Night's Vote Did—and Did Not—Do

Clarity matters. Tuesday night's vote did not adopt rent control or set a rent cap. Instead, the Council directed staff to begin designing a rent stabilization program—complete with enforcement structures, administrative systems, and possible interim measures such as a rent increase moratorium. That direction commits staff time, legal resources, and city capacity before any final policy is voted on. Once that machinery is built, the pressure to justify and expand it only increases. This is how cities drift into large, permanent programs without ever having a full public debate about cost, effectiveness, or exit strategies.

The Story That Revealed the Divide

One of the most revealing moments came when Council member **Kristen Sneddon** shared a personal story about growing up in subsidized housing and pointed to the fact that the property is now reportedly valued at roughly **$4 million**, presenting that appreciation as evidence the model "worked."

But the success of that story was never about the building.

A property's valuation is not liquid funding; it only becomes money if the owner sells the asset. Paper appreciation does not explain operating costs, long-term maintenance, or scalability. It does not fund enforcement staff, hearing boards, or administrative systems.

What actually "worked" was **upward mobility**.

A child grew up in subsidized housing, received an education, built a career, and no longer relied on public assistance. That is the outcome housing policy should be measured against—not the size, permanence, or market value of the system itself.

Today, Council member Kristen Sneddon and her husband earn a combined income in the range of **hundreds of thousands of dollars annually** through public-sector employment. That trajectory—education, opportunity, self-sufficiency—is the real success story. It is the model worth replicating.

But the framework the Council majority voted to advance does not focus on how people leave regulated or subsidized housing. It focuses on how to expand and manage it indefinitely.

That is not a hand up. It is a holding pattern.

Permanence Is Not Progress

Expanding rent caps, rental registries, enforcement boards, and long-term controls does not create ladders out of dependency. It creates permanence. Systems grow. Bureaucracies entrench. Housing becomes a destination rather than a bridge.

*A system focused on **regulation** measures success by how many units it controls.*

*A system focused on **mobility** measures success by how many people no longer need it.*

The uncomfortable question the four council members did not answer is simple:

Where is the off-ramp?

A policy that does not plan for people to exit it is not breaking cycles of poverty—it is institutionalizing them. Generation after generation remains inside the same system, while the system itself grows larger, more expensive, and harder to unwind.

A policy with no exit plan is not a ladder—it's a loop.

Why the Ellis Act Kept Coming Up

That question helps explain why the Ellis Act surfaced repeatedly during Tuesday night's discussion, raised by **CAUSE** and referenced by Council members **Meagan**

Harmon, **Kristen Sneddon**, and **Wendy Santamaria**. The Ellis Act is a California state law, adopted in 1985, that allows a property owner to **withdraw a rental property from the rental market entirely** if they choose to exit the rental business. Even in cities with strict rent control or rent stabilization, local governments **cannot force an owner to continue renting** once the Ellis Act is invoked. Cities may regulate notice and relocation assistance, but they cannot block the withdrawal itself.

That legal reality matters. When cities layer rent caps, registries, enforcement boards, penalties, and moratoria onto rental housing, the Ellis Act becomes the pressure-release valve. Owners who conclude that operating under increasingly complex and restrictive rules is no longer viable are legally entitled to leave the rental market altogether. The predictable result is **fewer rental units**, not more.

This is not a loophole. It is state law. And it means local policy choices directly influence whether owners remain in the rental market or exit it. A framework built around permanence and control—without realistic paths for success—risks accelerating withdrawals, shrinking supply, and intensifying competition for the units that remain.

When regulation becomes permanent and inflexible, the Ellis Act becomes the exit.

The Fiscal Reality That Was Ignored

That concern becomes even more serious when paired with Santa Barbara's financial reality. The City is already operating in a deficit—one that staff has warned is growing. Yet those warnings appeared to carry little weight with the Council majority.

Council members **Eric Friedman**, **Mike Jordan**, and **Mayor Randy Rowse** each raised the same concern on the record: Santa Barbara does not currently have the funding capacity to create, staff, and operate a full rent-stabilization enforcement system.

During the discussion, it was noted that **Santa Monica's rent control program costs more than $6 million annually to operate**, cited as a cautionary comparison. If Santa Barbara follows that path, rent stabilization would quickly become **one of the largest and most expensive administrative functions** the

City has ever taken on—at the same time residents are being warned about budget shortfalls, deferred maintenance, and service constraints.

Who Pays When the City Can't?

When cities create expensive regulatory systems without dedicated funding, the costs do not disappear. They are absorbed through higher taxes, higher fees, reduced services, or deferred maintenance elsewhere.

In other words, even residents who never benefit from the program pay for

it—either directly or through diminished city services. That reality deserves to be part of the conversation before Santa Barbara commits to building one of the largest bureaucratic systems in its history.

The Question the Council Still Owes the Public

Before Santa Barbara builds another permanent system, the Council owes residents clear answers:

What does success look like?

How much will this cost annually to operate?

How many people are expected to move out of regulated or subsidized housing—and on what timeline?

Without those answers, this is not policy—it is hope wrapped in bureaucracy.

Compassion is not measured by how long government programs last. It is measured by whether people no longer need them.

A system that offers only permanence is not a solution—it is a trap. And Tuesday night's vote moved Santa Barbara closer to building a system that manages dependency rather than ending it.

Real compassion builds exits. Tuesday night's vote did not.

Blame Isn't a Housing Strategy

Why California's affordability crisis can't be solved by scapegoating

I don't believe the Council majority is focused on how to help low-income families become higher-income families. Instead, the debate increasingly frames housing costs as the product of "greedy landlords," as though individual behavior explains a crisis that exists across the entire state. California has the highest housing costs in the nation. That reality points less to widespread misconduct and more to systemic policy failure. If the goal is lasting affordability, the answer lies in expanding opportunity and mobility — not in assigning blame or imposing punishment that ultimately limits choices for everyone.

Opportunity means making it possible for builders to build homes that even lower-income people can afford. As long as California continues an essentially “infill only” policy for new housing, true entry-level housing is impossible.

Opportunity, not punishment, is what ultimately makes housing affordable — because dignity requires independence.

Santa Barbara Raises Its Own Costs – Then Tells Landlords They Can't

Santa Barbara's affordability crisis isn't caused by landlords—it's created by the City's own policies.

Why can the City, County, and State increase fees, taxes, and utility rates on us—then tell us we can't adjust rents to cover those same increases?

That question came into sharp focus this week during *SB Current*'s Second Anniversary and Christmas party at Moby Dick's out on the wharf. The goal was simple: enjoy the sunset, share a good meal, and spend time with friends and supporters. By every measure, it was a success—relaxed, welcoming, and genuinely enjoyable.

That is, until everyone left.

As guests headed back to their cars, each was met with an $8.00 charge just to exit the wharf.

For decades, eating or shopping on the wharf meant your parking ticket was validated when you supported the businesses there. That practice is gone. Parking that once cost $2.00 per hour now costs $4.00 per hour.

Parking on the pier doubled.

That's a 100 percent increase.

Is that reflected in anyone's Cost of Living Adjustment? CPI?

This isn't about eight dollars. It's about a pattern Santa Barbara residents know all too well. Parking fees rise. Utility rates increase. New assessments appear. Each increase is described as necessary, modest, or unavoidable. And each one, on its own, may seem manageable.

Taken together, they are anything but.

Yet when landlords respond to those same cost increases, the conversation abruptly changes.

On Tuesday, December 16th, the City Council will again focus on landlords with a proposed rental registry and another discussion centered on rents. We're told this is about transparency and tenant protections. (The Council will be reviewing the timeline and process for preparing and considering a rent stabilization ordinance and providing initial guidance on key policy questions.)

City Deficit is Climbing

But registries don't run themselves. They require staffing, administration, and enforcement—adding employees, operational costs, and more pressure on an already strained budget. Those costs don't vanish; they fall on taxpayers.

Another layer of bureaucracy, more expense, and still no progress on the actual affordability crisis. The government wants more from the people providing the housing, while taking no responsibility for the costs it creates.

City leaders often ask why rents have risen so sharply in Santa Barbara. The answer may be closer than they think. Year after year, new rules, fees, and regulations are placed on housing providers. Each one adds cost. Each one reduces flexibility.

Could rising rents be connected to the cumulative impact of these policies?

Of course they could.

And the clearest example is hiding in plain sight: the City's own utility bills.

Sewer rates for **multi-family housing** have **more than doubled**—with the fixed monthly charge per unit rising from about **$18.50 to over $39**, and the volumetric rate per HCF climbing nearly **85%**. Water rates have climbed every year as well, through tier adjustments and base-charge increases that steadily inflate every bill. And trash? We still don't have the numbers—but based on the pattern, would anyone be surprised if those increases doubled too?

There's much more work to do, but here's something that anyone can understand.

The attached spreadsheet shows the change over the past ten years in three items:

1. The per HCF water charge for the cheapest connection (5/8”) for the lowest tier (first 4 HCF) to a single-family residence.
2. The per 5/8” hookup monthly water service fee.
3. California CPI.

As the chart shows, in the past ten years,

1. The per HCF water charge increased roughly 44%.
2. The monthly service charge increased 70%.
3. (California CPI * 60%) increased 25%.

Will City Council pledge to keep all future city rate increases to 60% of CPI, and if not, why not?

Year	SFR / HCF 1st 4	% chg	Per month svc	% chg	CCPI	% chg	60% CCPI
2015	4.20		23.49		249.666		
2016	4.20	0.00%	23.49	0.00%	255.303	2.21%	1.32%
2017	4.56	7.89%	25.89	9.27%	266.802	4.31%	2.59%
2018	4.44	-2.70%	27.36	5.37%	272.510	2.09%	1.26%
2019	4.44	0.00%	28.92	5.39%	280.638	2.90%	1.74%
2020	**4.44**	**0.00%**	**28.92**	**0.00%**	285.315	1.64%	0.98%
2021	4.62	3.90%	29.57	2.20%	297.371	4.05%	2.43%
2022	4.85	4.74%	31.05	4.77%	319.224	6.85%	4.11%
2023	5.10	4.90%	32.60	4.75%	331.804	3.79%	2.27%
2024	5.49	7.10%	36.21	9.97%	341.951	2.97%	1.78%
2025	6.06	9.41%	40.01	9.50%	**354.456**	3.53%	2.12%
10 yr chg	44.29%		70.33%		41.97%		25.18%

Santa Barbara single family water rates outpace CPI: Courtesy: Dale Francisco

Before I go any further, I want to pause and give credit where it’s due.

Thank you, Dale Francisco, for your tireless help with the data. Your clarity, precision, and patience made this work possible, and I’m deeply grateful.

Two caveats: Dale couldn’t find the water numbers for 2020 (in bold in the chart) so he just repeated the 2019 numbers.

The final CCPI numbers for 2025 are not yet available; the number given is as of August 2025.

"The City never limits its own price hikes—but it's eager to limit yours."

For many landlords, this is no longer theoretical. Nearly all have been forced to raise rents to the maximum allowed—not by choice, but by necessity. For years, rents often stayed flat until a tenant moved out. That model no longer works when costs rise annually but rent increases are restricted.

Failing to adjust rent incrementally means those costs are never recovered.

On October 6th, I submitted a Public Records Act Request (PRAR) seeking documentation of all city-approved increases over the past ten years. So far, the only data received involves water bills, including water rates, and sewer.

And here's where the double standard becomes impossible to ignore.

The City of Santa Barbara contracts with MarBorg Industries for trash collection. When MarBorg's costs increase, those increases are passed directly on to users. There is no debate about whether the company should absorb the expense. The rate is approved, and the higher bill arrives.

If landlords are told they cannot adjust rents to cover government-imposed fees and increases, then why is the City allowing its own contracted vendor to do exactly that?

If the principle is that housing providers should absorb rising costs "for the greater good," shouldn't that same principle apply to MarBorg? Shouldn't the City step in and prevent those increases from being passed on to residents?

That argument is never made—because everyone understands the reality: when costs rise, someone pays.

The City passes along increases. The State passes along increases. Contracted vendors pass along increases. Only landlords are told they should not.

Many landlords include water, sewer, and trash, in rent because properties often have a single meter. Others also include internet, gas, and electric. These are essential services with steadily rising costs—not optional extras. And that's before property tax, insurance, and maintenance.

After years of holding rents steady, landlords have been forced to change course to comply with new state, county, and city laws. If rent isn't adjusted each year, there is no way to keep up.

Ironically, this is the same logic the government uses to justify raising fees and taxes on residents—to keep up with rising wages and operating costs.

Which leads to an often-overlooked question:

Government-owned housing does not pay property taxes. Private property owners do. Yet both operate in the same housing market, and only one group is told to absorb every cost increase quietly.

If transparency and accountability are the goals, then both should apply in every direction—government as well as housing providers. Because the costs of running a property, like the costs of running a city, do not disappear because someone wishes they would. The rules should be consistent. The burdens should be shared. And the realities should be acknowledged—no matter who is paying them.

"Costs are real. Consequences are real. And it's time City Hall recognized both."

If the City wants transparency and accountability, then it's time to apply those standards to itself. Government housing doesn't pay property taxes. Private owners do. If transparency and accountability are the goals, then it's time for a full accounting of government housing—its income, its expenses, and the obligations it does not carry. Government raises its rates every year. Private owners are told they shouldn't. The math doesn't lie: Santa Barbara cannot keep demanding more from the people who provide the housing, while refusing to follow its own rules.

Costs are real. Consequences are real. And it's time City Hall recognized both.

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Mayor Rowse,

I am writing to urgently appeal to you to use your platform to inform single-family homeowners in Santa Barbara that rent control is potentially coming for them.

The commentary throughout the Tuesday, December 16th hearing repeatedly suggested that any exemptions to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO) should simply "follow state rules."

Unless Santa Barbara establishes explicit local carve-outs that go beyond state law, single-family homes may become subject to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance the moment an ADU is constructed. This could retroactively include every single family home that added an ADU following local adoption of state ADU laws in the 2017–2018 timeframe.

I am confident that no homeowner who constructed an ADU did so with the understanding that their primary residence could later be swept into what may become one of the most restrictive rent stabilization ordinances in the state. Had homeowners been clearly informed that adding an ADU could permanently subject their primary home to rent caps, just-cause eviction requirements, registries, and relocation obligations, many (if not most) would have made a very different decision.

Take the example of Los Angeles, which has a long-standing Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO) and is actively encouraging ADU construction:

- **Loss of Single-Family Exemption:** Adding an ADU to a single-family home built before the RSO cut off-date reclassifies the property as multi-unit. The main home then becomes subject to RSO rent caps and regulations, even though it was previously exempt as a single-family dwelling.
- **RSO Oversight:** If rented, the primary home becomes subject to RSO's strict rent increase limits, registration requirements, and other rules prioritizing tenant stability over owner rights.
- **ADU Status:** A new detached ADU would remain exempt from RSO, but still subject to just-cause eviction protections and state rent control under AB 1482.
- **The "Owner-Occupied" Trap:** While an "owner-occupied duplex" exemption may sound like a solution, it precludes a homeowner from ever renting out their primary house should their life circumstances change (e.g., a job relocation or family emergency) without falling permanently into the the pitfalls RSO regulations.

- **Barriers to Re-Occupancy:** If an owner ever wished to re-occupy their home after renting it, they would have to navigate the Just Cause Eviction Ordinance and Ellis Act rules, and likely pay significant relocation fees just to move back into their own house.
- **Administrative Burdens:** Properties under RSO must register annually, pay fees, and comply with reporting, burdens that extend to the main home once the ADU is added.

This creates an extortionary disincentive to the construction of the very ADUs our community needs and it is entirely counterintuitive to the state laws designed to encourage their development.

How many Santa Barbara homeowners will discover their property has been pulled into the RSO before it is too late? We must either defeat the RSO ordinance in its entirety or establish broad, permanent protections for single-family homes, regardless of whether an ADU is present.

Respectfully,

Julio

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
To All,

Good evening, I'm writing to share something that I'm very concerned about in Santa Barbara.

To begin, I was very surprised to see that two City Councilmembers (Santamaria and Sneddon) introduced a draft rent control ordinance to the City Council back in October that was prepared by outside groups and non-profits. Call me naive, but I thought that was the job of the elected officials and staff here in Santa Barbara. Out of curiosity, I submitted a Public Records Act (PRA) request back in October to request the email correspondence and documentation that happened behind the scenes that led up to this draft rent control ordinance.

The City denied that request, claiming all of the correspondence was attorney-client privileged. With a little help, I submitted the more robust request below. Please take a moment to read it in detail. It's a legitimate request for records of public business. In response to this request, I received only the attached list of organizations and people. I'm assuming that this is a list of outside people and groups who are involved.

If you google a few of these names, you will see that this list is a who's who of tenant rights advocates from the Bay Area. The city's refusal to disclose the documentation and correspondence suggests that these records are very important and is all the more reason that they should be made public.

I'm sharing this with you because I want other property owners to know that there is undue outside influence occurring in our city. And to share my concern that the city is hiding something, and we as property owners have a right to know what's really going on. If over a dozen attorneys and groups are involved in drafting the rent control ordinance, there is clearly a very strong lobbying effort from people outside of our community to influence political outcomes in Santa Barbara.

I hope you will share my concern and share this within your network of property owners so they are also aware.

Julio

Leah Simon-Weisberg, Professor
UCSF Law School & Executive Director
Movement Legal

Ethan Silverstein
Senior Staff Attorney
Movement Legal
Samuel P. Tepperman-Gelfant
Managing Attorney, Metropolitan Equity Team
Public Advocates
Skylar Spear, Staff Attorney
Metropolitan Equity Team
Public Advocates
Tahira Dean, Staff Attorney
Metropolitan Equity Team
Public Advocates
Alex Entrekin
Managing Attorney, Housing
Legal Aid Foundation of Santa Barbara County

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
To City of Santa Barbara staff,

I am your typical mom-and-pop landlord. My wife and I are both 77. We have and have had small rentals here and other places. I would like to make an assumption, that hopefully, we can all agree on. Landlords are in the business of making money. If you are employed, you are getting paid, and the businesses that you work for are making a profit. The landlord is no different. They have a significant investment in the equity of their properties and considerable costs and risks supporting them. The landlord that is not making money will not stay in business. They will not supply housing.

What are the causes of the high cost and the scarcity of housing? There are several factors. Among them are:

Lack of new housing.

An ever-increasing population.

The high cost of building and construction.

Zoning.

High mortgage rates.

Onerous building codes and regulations.

Ever-rising costs of insurance, maintenance, government fees, taxes, utilities, etc.

Municipal, County, State, and Federal policy.

Adverse legislation.

And now, criminal litigation.

Are landlords, as a rule, the cause of these factors? Landlords want things to be as inexpensive as possible and they want profitable housing to invest in. If there was an ample supply of housing, prices would stabilize.

OUR LEGISLATURES HAVE DONE LITTLE TO CORRECT OR DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS listed above or create additional housing. They have made small steps like allowing Granny-flat construction and modifying subdivision regulations. The burden of falsely mitigating the problem is placed on the landlord by legislation. Currently, governmental laws and regulations are not only making investing in rentals unprofitable but they are also taking basic ownership rights away from property owners. Property owners no longer have control over who lives in their property or on what terms. ON THE WHOLE, GOVERNMENTAL ACTIONS AND INACTIONS ARE TO BLAME! They regulate the landlords instead of finding and correcting the root causes. These are complex, difficult issues that require complex and difficult solutions. To date, the government has not been up to the task. They are taking the easy way. They blame the landlord and make him pay for the inability of our government to do its job.

In the short run, rent control, legislation, and regulation, to date, have only been a short-term panacea. It will only make the problem worse in the future. If the landlord cannot make a profit, he will stop investing in housing. Exacerbating this lack of profit is the increase in adverse legislation, loss of private property rights, and now the threat of prosecution. Under these conditions, landlords will only maintain their properties at a minimal level because they know they will not be reimbursed for any improvements. Landlords are now leaving units empty rather than letting tenants obtain rights over their property. The landlord can find other easier and less risky places to invest. What is the alternative if the investor does not provide housing? Government housing? That has worked out well in the past!

OPPOSED!!!

Scott McIver’

There is really nothing salvageable in this document. It is an egregious effort to take away private property rights without compensation. And who's kidding who with the "fair return" language. This should be determined by an open market, not a board comprised of single-minded arbiters.

It's a shame that our esteemed city council as well as staff refuse to take into account testimony from seasoned economists and real estate professions who have provided documented cases where this attempt of controlling prices has the opposite effect on supply and condition of housing provided while council and staff have provided no evidence to refute this.

It's a forgone conclusion with current staff and council that this will pass in some miserable format which will then put the burden on landlords and the city to monitor all of this, all for the benefit of one group of citizens at the expense of another.

Steve Brown

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Mayor Rowse and City Councilmembers,

I am writing to express my strong, unequivocal opposition to the proposed permanent rent stabilization ordinance currently under public review. While the stated intent of this policy is to protect tenants, the actual mechanism—capping annual rent increases at 60% of CPI or 3%, whichever is lower—ignores economic reality and will deeply damage the quality, availability, and safety of Santa Barbara's housing stock.

Operating and maintaining residential property in California has become exponentially more expensive due to surging property insurance premiums, rising local utility rates, escalating material prices, and higher construction labor costs. By limiting rent adjustments to a fraction of the inflation rate, the City Council is actively stripping housing providers of the ability to absorb these cost increases. When standard operational expenses outpace allowable revenue growth, property owners are forced to delay non-critical capital improvements and structural maintenance. This inevitably leads to the deterioration of the very housing units the City claims it wants to protect.

Furthermore, the administrative scope of this proposal is fiscally irresponsible. Creating a first-of-its-kind municipal rental registry, establishing an independent Rent Stabilization Board, and hiring dedicated staff to handle complex landlord-tenant petitions is projected to cost local taxpayers at least $2 million annually. Funding this massive bureaucratic apparatus through a per-unit fee structure places an unnecessary financial burden on property owners, adding a secondary layer of regulation to a multifamily market that is already heavily regulated by state laws like AB 1482.

Local rent control mandates have historically proven to reduce housing turnover, stifle the development of new rental properties, and incentivize owners to remove units from the rental market entirely. Instead of creating expensive, adversarial government oversight that penalizes property owners for broader economic challenges, the City should focus its resources on streamlining the building approval process and expanding public-private partnerships to increase the overall supply of housing.

I urge the City Council to reject this flawed framework before the final voting deadline this summer and to look toward sustainable, market-driven solutions that protect both housing accessibility and private property rights.

Thank you for your time and your consideration of this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Jason L Blakemore, *Santa Barbara Property Manager / Resident*

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
I have reviewed the above draft ordinance, and I offer the comments below. It also appears that the people drafting this ordinance are out ahead of their skis on this issue - this is a waste of time.

Consideration of adopting this ordinance should be abandoned in its entirety for the following reasons:

1. There is no reason to manipulate natural economic forces, i.e. laws of supply and demand in this situation. One has to either effect changes to supply or demand to have a permanent, non-artificial solution. There have been countless examples of government failures when they try to interfere with natural economic forces. Things will eventually stabilize on their own, although there may be unexpected fluctuations between now and then. It may also take longer. So be it!
2. The Rent Stabilization Board adds another layer of bureaucracy to the over-bureaucratic City government environment. California needs less of this. The City has too much "process" in its decision-making that adds time and cost and provides little value-added. Under this structure, the public would have to be aware of the motivations and hidden agendas of RS board members. Don't need more of this - we have enough already.
3. The City can't afford this added bureaucracy. Budgets appear to be tightly wound, and future budget decisions will be even more contested. Why add another questionable organization and budget item that will make decision-making more difficult in the future? How easy will it be to dismantle this bureaucracy once it is deemed non-functional? Rent stabilization cannot compete with public safety issues for funding and attention and will likely fail because of its own weight.

Regards,

Don Kruszenski

Santa Barbara Landlord

I understand the pressure from renters that is driving you to do this project. But it's naive.

The City WILL be bitten by unexpected consequences of trying to control the market. Landlords will take units off the market, or skimp on maintenance. People who have rent-controlled apartments will stay in them for a long time, or cheat and pass them to their friends or children. Etc. etc. It's happened in every city with rent controls.

The demand for rentals in Santa Barbara will always exceed the supply (even if you let the supply increase). Artificial price controls won't change that.

Good luck... it will be amusing to watch the results.

David Beaver

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

Hello, I am writing an order to make a public comment for the recent City of Santa Barbara rent stabilization moratorium.

I am part of an LLC that owns five rental units in the city. I have also been a renter in the city.

Although I understand what the ordinance has or is created for, I believe that in the future, this will greatly hurt and make the issue worse. I know many rental owners/landlords have brought up the issue with rising costs versus being able to raise rents. Since the stabilization was introduced, myself and the other two members of the LLC have discussed selling because of the foreseeable issues that will come to be. I understand you want to make rent fair for everybody, but you also have to realize how expensive things are to keep a rental. I recently did some temporary work for a resident doctor at Cottage Hospital . He spoke of the rental he had found about a month ago and it was very expensive. He said that the biggest issue for him here was availability. I believe that if this ordinance goes through with how it is written, you are going to see less and less rentals on the market and in years to come the issue is going to be far greater than ever imagined. I hope you fairly look at both sides. I am also discouraged that the vote on the city council is completely biased. The fact that this is allowable is completely unfair.

Sincerely, Angelin Castagnola.

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
You people have absolutely lost your minds!!

How is a regular person supposed to be able to figure this out?

More importantly, you have entirely f#$%ed up the rental situation in SB with your meddling. I know many landlords, who before your imposition of a 10% cap on rent increases would NEVER have considered raising their rents that much on an annual basis. You intervened, and they all did INSTANTLY.

Now, you have committed a taking by saying landlords can't increase their rents at all. Again, HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MINDS????

Moreover, what is a landlord supposed to tell the tradespeople working on their property--"sorry, go to the City Council about your rates, because I can't pay them because I can't raise my rent to cover my costs"??? Who is going to pay for regular maintenance and necessary upkeep when they can't raise the rents accordingly. I am a life-long democrat and have always favored fair rents, but you people have absolutely fucked everythig up. Get out of private business and manage this city with some competence--something that has been missing for years.

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Hello:

I am running a business of residential rentals to offer housing to the community. Not all rentals in Santa Barbara are at market rate.

Although I agree with some of your ideas, I believe you haven't thought them through.

Your proposal of putting a cap on raising rents (the limit formula) does not keep up with the rate of inflation. This means that I will not be able to afford to put money back into my property to keep it well maintained for the tenants. If I won't be able to maintain the property, then I run the risk of losing my insurance policy.

Have you thought through the longer term consequences of this for landlords? What will happen is that we will sell because we cannot afford the upkeep and then others will buy and rebuild making rents even more expensive. This does not provide anymore housing only an even more exclusive rental market. I already know two landlords who are selling.

The solution is to let the market play out. Unfortunately, you can't house all who desire to live in Santa Barbara.

Sincerely,

S. Fawson

HI, I would like to expand on premises made by a fellow citizen opposed to Rent Stabilization. John Burke writes:

- By capping returns while leaving costs uncontrolled, rent control pushes many small "mom-and-pop" landlords to sell, reducing diversity of ownership and local stewardship.
- Rent control shrinks rental supply over time as owners convert units to condos, short-term rentals or owner-occupied housing.
- It discourages maintenance and reinvestment, leading to deteriorating building quality and less attractive housing stock.
- Early "winners" are long-tenured, often better-off incumbents, not the lower-income households who most need help.
- It raises rents and search times for everyone outside the protected pool, especially new residents and younger families.
- Targeted subsidies and policies that expand housing supply do a far better job of improving affordability without the damaging side effects.

I agree and repeat these points, yet the last one is quite important.

The example of the [Housing Authority's] subsidy programs is more than coincidental, regarding targeted or 'means tested' distribution of benefits.

If you cast the freeze, cover, controlled or stabilize rent oversight to every rental situation, the outcome is effectively ruined.

Initial rent amounts are pretty normal when a rental term is started. It does not become valuable until some time has passed and the market advances past the freeze, controlled or stabilized period of time. And once the disparagement is established, the value takes on an impetus.

For an example, and please, ask and answer this for yourself:

If a family who has 5 years stay in a rental and it is now frozen at 3-4 years ago pricing. Will they move to better housing should they 1., get higher paying jobs, perhaps after getting new education during that period? 2. Move to bigger housing after an increase in family by births or relatives joining them, 3. to become home buyers, etc.?

Or can the Ordinance's rent pricing deterrent be an encouragement to forego these natural changes, called Filtering and Mobility in the science of Sociology, and cause the saving for the renter to be applied to other agendas of savings, lifestyles, vacationing or any other outcome other than aiding workforce housing and housing for City workers.

To forego Means Testing for beneficiaries can reduce the outcome for the target demographic to such a small percentage that the entire complex plan is not even close to being worthwhile toward achieving the original goals.

This also affects the turnover of the affordable sector of housing stock for new arrivals, for those City workers commuting in, for new home buying sales, the rental values of upgrade rentals in the area and property overuse with extra occupants coming and coming in. 100% of these aspects are not positive and are disruptions to the natural processes of social movements. The freeze on rent causes a freeze on the movement. The stock becomes frozen over time.

Do not bring this to Santa Barbara. Opposed,

Thanks, David

Please, please, please review the impact of policy like this in other major cities in the US. I know our intents are good. This will discourage investors building more housing. And what we simply need is more housing/apartments.

Barrett Cordero

Kamunity Properties
PO BOX 30270
Santa Barbara, Ca 93130
805-682-5008

Dear City Council Members,

Thank you for taking the time to hear our thoughts again concerning all the changes that are being put before you to change the rental housing situation. To refresh your memory, we are a local, family-owned property management company established in the early eighties with apartment complexes built in the late 1960's by our parents. We currently own 125 units in Santa Barbara, and an additional 121 units in San Luis Obispo.

Our parents built the apartments with the intent to provide the average working person in Santa Barbara a clean, affordable home. We have worked hard to maintain that vision even today, priding ourselves on having some of the lowest rents in Santa Barbara. We truly care about our tenants and provide on site managers and maintenance personnel, some of whom have been with our company for over 25 years. The data supports our tenant first approach. By looking at length of tenancy amongst our 3 complexes in the city, we have 52 tenants that have been with us over 5 years, 12 tenants that have been with us over 10 years, 9 tenants that have been with us for over 15 years, and 4 tenants that have entrusted our housing for over 25 years. We take great pride in those long-term tenancies, as well as our zero vacancies. We only give one rent raise per year based on rising operational costs with no added fees.

Despite our desire to stay affordable for our tenants, we do not support the Rent Stabilization Ordinance in its current form. This ordinance would penalize our family owned business with increased paperwork, unnecessary oversight, and would cost us money, all while taking business decisions away from us as the apartment owners. We agree that something needs to happen in order for Santa Barbara to remain affordable for the average worker, but this ordinance is not the solution to this problem. This ordinance does not apply to units built after 1995, or any units that are owned by corporations or real estate development trusts, which are the entities that are actually driving up rents in our city. In essence, we would have to deal with the limitations of this ordinance while keeping our rents low, while these larger corporate and development agencies are exempt and charging much higher rents. They continue to make money and overcharge tenants, while smaller local companies are penalized!

We are also greatly concerned about the enforcement of this ordinance. The appointed Program Administrator will have a long list of rules to follow, and without robust resources, will have no easy way to enforce them. They will be quickly overwhelmed which will lead to longer response times for tenants and landlords. This is not a good use of time for a City employee, will budgetarily strain the City, and will lead to citizens being heavily discontented with City administration, as well as City Council. This is not what we want for our community. We need less bureaucracy to make Santa Barbara thrive economically, not more.

To whom it may concern, please see below my comments as a rental owner against rent control/stabilization:

- Reduces overall rental housing supply as owners convert units or exit the market
- Discourages new construction by limiting potential returns for developers
- Shifts investment away from regulated markets into more profitable jurisdictions
- Contributes to long-term housing shortages in high-demand urban areas
- Drives up rents in unregulated units due to constrained supply
- Creates a two-tier market (protected tenants vs. market-rate renters)
- Distorts natural supply-demand pricing signals in housing markets
- Can increase overall market rents over time despite short-term caps
- Reduces maintenance and reinvestment incentives for landlords
- Leads to deterioration in housing quality over time
- Delays or eliminates capital improvements and upgrades
- Depresses property values and asset performance
- Reduces tenant mobility as renters stay to preserve below-market rents
- Leads to inefficient use of housing (e.g., over/under-occupied units)
- Limits availability for new renters entering the market
- Creates "lock-in" effects that slow labor mobility and economic dynamism
- Benefits are not means-tested; higher-income tenants often capture subsidies
- Creates inequality between incumbent tenants and new entrants
- Can disadvantage younger renters and more mobile populations
- Does not directly increase affordability for those outside the regulated pool
- Can reduce property tax revenues due to lower valuations
- Shifts costs of affordability policy onto a concentrated group (landlords)
- Introduces regulatory complexity and compliance costs

- Encourages regulatory arbitrage (conversion, redevelopment, exemptions)
- Raises property rights concerns (limits on pricing and asset use)
- Subject to ongoing political and legal challenges
- Can create policy rigidity that is difficult to unwind
- **Short-term benefit:** Protects existing tenants from rent shocks
- **Long-term risk:** Suppresses supply, distorts markets, and shifts cost burden

Regards,

Fairbanks Properties, LLC

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Honorable Mayor and City Council Members,

I have rentals in the City of Santa Barbara. Most are single family residences, and I also have some apartments downtown.

Most of my homes and apartments house Housing Authority clients with the houses for larger families and especially pets who need yards. The studios downtown are liked by HA as well as Good Samaritans, Peoples Housing and recently New Beginnings, a County program focused on car dwellers.

Our Housing Authority I consider one of the finest in the country and there is no better people doing a better job to be found. They are a pleasure to work with.

A young man entered a studio in the mid 90's at $675 a month and walked 5 blocks to work as a baker at Our Daily Bread … for 15 years. He met a girl, moved and his rent was then $850. Those units were in the $1400 range by then. Rent increases were less needed years back when expenses were less volatile.

I am offended by this 60% government intervention Cap to Consumer Price Index being Proposed by council members Santamaria/Sneddon. To be blunt, I won't do it (let's use this response example to expand on possible outcomes). If I quit and sell, it will take 400 new developed units to set aside 10% of their units for lower cost rentals to regain our removed units.

None of the new units will have yards for pets or be the gorgeous 1930's houses we have loved owning here in Santa Barbara. At new mortgages and tax rates our sold SFR's will not become rentals again; they will be lived in by the rich who will be buying them; the one's that Santamaria and Sneddon characterize as villains in their Proposal.

The Rich.

We can still see earlier times with the railroad sidecar parked nostalgically down at our train station. That early example of the rich coming for stays in Santa Barbara used railcars like we do RV's now. Santa Barbara is cursed with the interest of the rich by its natural beauty, according to Santamaria/Sneddon. Yet Santa Barbara government caters to attract the wealthy with its tourist industry. And this has always been present. The workforce housing works for the rich, do they not? And don't we all at varying levels?

Costs.

Insurance was $325 a house when I started. Until recently these averaged $795, but in the last 18-24 months they have doubled to $1400. Some houses have been classed into flood zones with more costs.

SLIP Program. Dale over at Public Works and I might start exchanging Christmas cards, we have done so much work together! Santa Barbara is reviewing the sewer lines and requiring sewer laterals be replaced on these original homes. This was $6500 back in 2016, Now at $22,000 on Victoria street this Fall.

Property Taxes. I pay the Mayor (good day Mayor Rowse!). We send in about 160k a year in local Property Taxes.

Utility costs pace ahead of the national average (currently $171.21) and have embarrassingly increased in California with the Clean Energy over the last 20 years. Santa Barbara shows a 55,000,0000 budget for Clean Energy. SB County contributes .000016 to the global plant food tally. That is 16 one hundred thousandths of one percent, but this is a **priority** position over the housing crisis locally.

Older housing stock requires more maintenance, more costly than new. Mine date between 1896 and 1936, except we have an outlier on the Mesa from 1978. Older homes never become fully new again. Local codes on remodeling, with insulation and envelope standards implying Alaska and not our Southern Savana; has Global Warming adding costs yet again.

Unintended Consequences

2 years ago Proposition 33 attempted California Vacancy Control. The response throughout the State had rents increased by every landlord this side of dementia. Landlords bolstered rent levels in case 33 passed and froze things. 33 failed but the Unintended Consequences were in; possibly up to 15% Statewide rents increase just on the threat that Prop 33 might pass.

The dysfunction is centered around successfully enticing the wealthy and having this vibrant economy and City, and then not addressing problems that economy causes with that revenue. Council then assigns that money to other reasons and agendas and blames others (I believe this is an unaware phenomenon); this is not an valid approach to the problem itself, the wealthy and their role, or to the landlords to whom you are assigning blame with this proposal.

Please vote against this ironic approach to solving workforce housing, itself an Unintended Consequence of successful tourism. Of the thousands of rentals in Santa Barbara you will have thousands of annual applications for higher reimbursement, appeals and more, to offset the natural higher costs in expensive Santa Barbara. The need is a given and you will have many hundreds of inappropriate interferences of property owners rights of a fair return of by thier correct citation these naturally higher costs in expensive Santa Barbara.

This Santamaria/Sneddon Proposal is chasing a ball into the street and will not produce the intended results, but will end in Unintended Consequences. In the movie Shane, the homeowner tells Shane to leave and directs a gun on him. Shane quietly asks the man to put the gun down and simply 'ask him to leave'. The perplexed homeowner asks, what's the difference. Shane responds saying, "I'd just like it to be my idea". Have you asked for more help from Landlords? And what compels you that this would be a bad idea?

We think we are already the landlord you want, but it was our idea and we want to still own that. Not all landlords are alike, nor are all Cities and their needs. We are offended by being included in this Proposal.

Thank you very much for your time, Best

David

Opposed; Rent Control

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Rent Stabilization Office,

I am a UCSB alumnus and after graduation I worked as a counselor helping people in Santa Barbara try to use Section 8 vouchers, so I have seen firsthand how brutal the shortage of truly affordable units can be. I am worried this ordinance misses the people who are most at risk: families and students who are struggling just to find a safe, basic place to live.

Decades of research on rent control show a repeated pattern where rent caps shrink rental supply and lead to worse conditions over time, which ends up hurting new and lower-income renters the most. This proposal also treats a small local landlord with a 4- or 5-unit building the same as a large corporate operator, effectively asking a small business owner to subsidize tenants who may even earn more than they do.

I urge you instead to focus on targeted tools that research has shown can help the poor without choking supply, such as housing vouchers and assistance for tenants facing extreme rent spikes, and to provide a clear exception for small landlords so we do not pass a broad policy that ultimately closes more doors on the very people it is meant to help.

Sincerely,
Alec Reisner

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
As Rent Ordinance Restrictions will reduce covering operational and management cost increases to the owners, fewer investors are attracted to the area while current landlords also grapple and may drop out. With less demand for investors in such conditions, properties lose value and property taxes will fall.

Cambridge Massachusetts ended Rent Restrictions and experienced this cycle, with the rise and return of property values and recovery in the Tax Rolls when the restrictions were lifted. The increase in the Tax rolls more than covered a later 'Rise Up Cambridge' program, which sent $500/month To Means Tested households in their community, even in to 2026.

The example of 1.6 billion in loss from property tax revenue over 24 years (1970 to 1994) while 300 million in rent savings were implemented during that time became documented. The burst in property value returning culminated in a perfect double-blind experience which scientifically has documented the true community loss from this form of Governmental intrusion. The Property values returned with zero other natural or man-made influences diluting the phenomenon.

If interested, the dissertation on this phenomenon by Arthur C. Nelson, Ph.D., FAcSS, FAICP Emeritus Professor, University of Arizona Emeritus Presidential Professor, University of Utah, can be sourced at:

rent_regulation_policy_in_the_united_states_2024.pdf

Page 22:

About $300 million of this gain [referring to the Cambridge example] was attributable to the direct decontrol of rent-regulated properties. It is a measure of the direct benefit enjoyed by rent-regulated residents. One interpretation is that while the few rent-regulated residents enjoyed a $300 million benefit through below-market rents, the rest of Cambridge incurred a $1.7 billion cost.

The loss to the City and all citizens benefiting from the current Property Tax basis cannot be reimbursed by Registration fee's to landlords. Its actually cheaper to just mail lower income residents a check.

P.S. *The program 'Rise Up Cambridge' was ended in April 2026 when the statistics found that literally none of the recipients effectively used the funds to better their situation, beyond more TV's, cars and other short term boosts to their immediate living standards.*

Oppose Rent Controls

Thanks, David

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Mobility to better one's situation in the world is one of the opportunities most people are familiar with and utilize, and one of America's freedoms. The scientific influences of Mobility and Filtering are integral parts of the health of all housing environments. Without their presence, critical balances falter and present consequences.

Mobility involves coming from somewhere less advantageous to a better quality of living, better jobs and for family or health reasons, etc. Filtering would be young couples entering the market, often starting in older and less expensive housing, and then moving up with better paying jobs and perhaps family expansions, including transitioning to Mobility departures as well.

Government intervention of Rent Freezing and Rent Stabilization/Control become opposing efforts against these influences on housing markets. Those who can afford an area and come in for new jobs, education or bringing new businesses and services find the market atrophied. People have artificially stopped moving and the shortage has only deepened.

Addressing a market with blanket regulations without Means Testing also causes problems. That upwardly mobile set ready to Filter up chooses to stay put, enjoying the savings of the freeze and they travel, invest or entertain themselves with the ordinances result of housing savings instead. Without qualifying recipients like the Housing Authority and other programs, the largest majority of housing is subject to being held back for unintended purposes and doesn't even reach the target purposes.

Los Angeles County; Cook County, IL; Harris County, TX; Maricopa County, AZ; and San Diego County, all have experienced higher increases in wages than property values and rents, and are delivering much higher standards of living today. There are hundreds of such locations, but these are the top right now.

Better paying jobs and affordable housing are reasons to move and almost all of us have done it. Stopping Mobility and Filtering degrades the environment and is a form of social polluting really. There is no where for new families, artists, healthcare workers, new business owners, retirees, investors and education seekers to come in to. The stock is gone, and the balance disturbed.

Making new problems to replace old ones is not solving anything using Rent Freezes and Rent Stablization/Controls.

Oppose Rent Controls

Thanks, David

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear SB City Council,

I am a 45 year resident and taxpayer to this City. Sadly, I have witnessed the City fall victim to decay due to City Council members who have lost sight of why visitors come here and why we choose to live in this once beautiful place. Instead, extreme politics have led to the decline of our once thriving city.

This is not a popularity contest. You are elected to run the City and make it better, not to allow others to run your platform. You are elected to take the long view.

<u>This misguided ordinance</u> only serves <u>to reduce the quality and availability of rentals</u> in the City. I was in attendance at the previous City Council hearings on this subject and was appalled at the rent control activists and lobbyists screaming and insulting the Mayor and City Council members. These people have no idea what it takes to run a City. Do not let the tenant organizations bully you that rent control is the only option to provide rentals in our City. This Rent Control ordinance is folly and based on emotion, not fact or foresight. This is a fallacy.

A direct effect of rent control on apartment buildings and multiunit housing is the reduction of available cash for the maintenance and upkeep, and thus safety, of these buildings and grounds. This reduces the quality of these rentals. Rent control discourages investors from buying these properties and instead runs the risk of conversion to condos or simply abandonment or tearing down of this housing to build more high cost single family homes or luxury apartments.

Those of you that are homeowners or investment owners see the folly in rent control. The others on this Council need to have enough fortitude and wisdom to look beyond the short sighted idea of controlling other people's property rights and instead see rent control as it really is. This ordinance is a path to destruction of quality housing in our City.

I look forward to seeing you stand up for the quality of our City and oppose the rent control ordinance and other paths to further destruction of this City.

Debbie Shaw Booth

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear City Councilmembers and Staff,

I am writing to provide public comment on the City's draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance.

As a renter myself, I understand the concern around sudden or excessive rent increases. Housing stability is important, and tenants should not be put in a position where unpredictable rent growth forces them out of their homes or out of the community.

At the same time, I believe any rent stabilization policy needs to be grounded in balance. Rental housing is expensive to own and operate, and those costs continue to rise over time. Owners still need enough flexibility to maintain their buildings, pay their obligations, make necessary repairs, and justify the continued investment of time and capital into the property. If the policy becomes too restrictive, the City may unintentionally create conditions where owners defer maintenance, avoid improvements, or become less willing to invest in the existing housing stock.

Santa Barbara's affordability issue is also, at its core, a supply issue. There are simply more people who want to live in the City than there are available homes to support that demand. Rent stabilization may help with short-term tenant stability, but it should not be viewed as a full solution to the housing affordability problem. If the City wants to make meaningful long-term progress, it should also focus on making responsible housing development easier, faster, and more economically feasible.

I respectfully encourage the City to pursue a balanced approach that protects tenants from unreasonable increases while still allowing property owners to maintain and reinvest in their buildings. A policy that supports tenant stability but ignores the cost of operating housing could create the very problems it is trying to prevent.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Jay Daily

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
To Whom It May Concern,

We wish to draw urgent attention to the escalating challenge of the cost of living in California, a critical issue whose severity is being significantly compounded by persistent increases in property taxes and the soaring costs of insurance premiums across the state.

These foundational financial burdens are not merely abstract figures; they represent a tangible and substantial impediment to economic stability for countless residents. The direct consequence of these rising expenses is acutely felt in housing costs, where increased operational expenditures are inevitably passed on, leading to higher rental prices and broader inflation across the economy. This dynamic places immense financial pressure on individuals and families, diminishing their disposable income and contributing to an overall decline in affordability.

It is our considered view that before any new regulations concerning income limits or similar measures are implemented, a comprehensive and integrated strategy must first be meticulously developed and executed to directly address and mitigate these underlying cost drivers. Focusing solely on income-side interventions without tackling the fundamental cost structures risks an incomplete solution, potentially perpetuating or even exacerbating the current affordability crisis.

Effectively stabilizing property tax rates and regulating insurance markets is not just advisable; it is absolutely essential. Such a proactive approach is vital for fostering a more equitable and stable economic landscape, alleviating the severe financial strain currently experienced by Californian households, and ensuring the long-term economic well-being and prosperity of our communities statewide. We advocate for immediate and decisive action on these critical fronts.

Sincerely

Olga Villarreal.

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear City Council,

In an attempt to solve a crisis situation in the City, the Council is using “feel good” solutions that do not create valuable long-term solutions. Perhaps the City Council should educate itself in economics to better solve the problem.

One educated economist, Peter Rupert is quoted below.

“As has been well-documented by virtually all economists, across the globe and political spectrum, controlling rents or their growth ultimately leads to exactly the opposite of what the proponents of such controls are hoping to achieve.

Increase the supply of apartments through thoughtful permitting, zoning and removing onerous regulations, such as requiring any units being built to set aside a large percentage of so-called *affordable units*.”

Thank you.

Susan Cleary Johnson

A letter this Spring from Mayor Randy Rouse about Rent Stabilization detailed some of the causes and effects when instituting Rent Controls in a City. Mayor Rouse highlighted possible reductions in the rental stock, investors and small landlords exiting and banks hesitating to finance old and newer housing as possible outcomes. He also writes of higher City costs, such as Santa Monica's 6 million annual expense to just implement the program itself.

What can be added to the potential costs for Santa Barbara are the additional aspect of property values declining and losses to Property Tax revenue. These are taxes are uses for all manner of public services, parks and quality of life issues each year. Professor Nelson, Emeritus Professor, University of Arizona, Emeritus Presidential Professor, University of Utah, has extensive research results on this phenomenon and writes;

'Ren**t** regulations reduce the value of regulated as well as nearby unregulated properties, reducing

real estate tax revenue to the locality. The imposition of **rent** regulations accelerates the loss of rental

units from the housing stock'.

With the higher valued real estate environment of Santa Barbara, this could have an even larger impact than other aspects under discussion and effect our community in unexpected ways not being considered.

When you take the initial housing stock and freeze the rents, it also freezes those renters to stay and move less. This can disrupt the natural flow within cities called Filtering and Mobility. New City employees who have to commute from Ventura, which is one of the basis's presented for Rent Stabilization, will find less new housing open. Existing tenants do not move up when addition relatives or new babies arrive, and this can begin an overuse of facilities and neighborhoods. Seniors who should be moving to safer housing begin to stay in rentals beyond their capabilities (stairs, balconies, no elevator, etc). A variety of unintended consequences become possible, with losses to property values and tax declines having the largest potential for distress.

Since the effects of such a Proposal affect everyone in the City, I agree with the Mayor that this should be voted on as Proposal. We should allow everyone who will be affected to have their voice heard as well.

As a PS; $2,000,000 which is estimated initially for the cost of Santa Barbara's RSO could pay 30% of rents for $6,666,600 in rent, or 2050 households renting at $3250 per month. That covers all the fixed income SSI recipients in our area and would cause none of the aforementioned losses threatening the horizon otherwise. Something similar was done in Cambridge, Mass., using the funds recaptured after ending their Rent Control and from the returning surge of property value Taxes.

Thanks, David

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

1. In order for this to work there will have to be a sweeping statement that all illegal rental units in the city are now legal with no inspections and costly repairs. As 50% to 60% of units in the city are illegal without this statement most will not register said units.These units are mostly affordable housing. Also these units generally have happy tenants as the only way the city enforces closure of them is by unhappy tenants or unhappy neighbors who turn then in for enforcement so the owners of said units go out of their way to please these affordable housing tenants

2. this control by the city will have the direct effect of eliminating units.

a) my good friend who is 84 years old has a guest house in the back where her son stays when visiting her. She now requires more permanent care so he is moving full time into her 3 bedroom house. Their plan was to rent out the quest house but after reading this rent control ordinance she wants nothing to do with it as would most homeowner born before 1980 . They support the ideals that made our county great and would rather use it for storage than bow to socialism.

b) many single family homeowners have 2nd investment properties with a duplex etc and had planned on adding 2 or 3 or 4 additional units on the property as zoning permits. If they instead have the option of building 1 additional large unit and move into that they can then rent their single family home and avoid this awful registry and program. They also have the option of buying another single family home outside the city. This will directly impact the families that are the backbone of our country and city as these homes are rightfully excluded.

3. Whoever devised this ordinance is not living in a reality based world

a) this is grossly unfair to the landlord to be limited to 60% of inflation.It is asking the owner to forfeit 40% of their net income while the tenant gains 40% every year. In the years of higher inflation such as the recent years of over 9% inflation owners will sink at a much faster pace when they are limited to only a 3% adjustment. Each and every year owners will sink further financially and tenants will have more expendable income at the sacrifice of owners. Costs are rising rapidly in many sectors. Insurance has skyrocketed I had to cancel my fire insurance as the cost became unaffordable and I know many others who have done the same. Those that do have insurance may understandable choose to not rebuild when the next major wildfire rolls threw town. Many folks will not be able to rebuild their rental units. Property taxes go up 1% yearly, utilities and labor are out of control (I have to now pay my gardener $35 an hour and he isn't even a legal citizen.) Have you priced what a 10' piece of copper pipe costs now compared to 5 years ago? I would really like to get into the mindset of the people that wrote this ordinance as it would make a wonderful pychological thriller.

4. Housing stock will shrink, growing families will be forced to stay put in their 1 bd apt. and new city hires will find no place to live.

I called the City business tax license office and told them I will not pay for my business license until the legal case is resolved so my City business tax is on hold until the case is resolved. The business tax office told me they will not be charging me late fees or moving to collections either until the legal case is resolved, thankfully.

Janet

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed permanent rent stabilization ordinance. While the intent to protect tenants is understandable, implementing strict rent caps will worsen Santa Barbara's housing crisis and fundamentally alter our community's housing landscape for the worse.

In particular, I urge the Council to consider the following critical consequences:

- **Loss of "Mom and Pop" Landlords:** Independent, local housing providers operate on thin margins and cannot absorb the combined weight of strict rent caps, inflation, and new administrative registration fees. This policy will force local owners to exit the market.
- **Corporate Consolidation:** When independent owners sell, their properties are invariably bought by large corporate investors. These institutional firms manage strictly by the numbers, lack local community ties, and are incentivized to perform only the bare minimum maintenance required by law since they cannot recover the cost of property upgrades.
- **Harm to Future Generations:** Rent control creates a "locked-in" effect that paralyzes housing turnover. This artificial scarcity means young professionals, families, and new residents will face an incredibly depleted pool of available housing and drastically higher initial base rents.

Rent stabilization treats the symptom of high prices rather than the root cause: a lack of supply. I urge the City Council to reject this ordinance and instead focus on policies that incentivize housing construction and support local, independent housing providers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Anita Blakemore

The introduction of this policy has sent a clear message to housing providers in SB….don't invest in a market with socialists policies whereby the ignorant leaders believe a government can correct the free market. The advocates for these policies have yet to offer examples where these policies have benefited any communities so we will hold them accountable as the champions of ignorance. We need more supply of housing not more government bureaucracy. The State of CA already has rent control and we think that bringing a much more severe policy will be the answer….pure folly and so unfortunate for our community.

Brad Frohling

Shame on you for not taking this to a public vote. I'm sure it's because ever since it has gone to the public, it's been defeated.

Mary Lu Edick

I would agree with rent stabilization if all the companies I have to pay for my property I own and rent will guarantee to not increase my costs, i.e. utilities, taxes, insurance, home owner fees, maintenance costs, landscaping, city license fees, etc, etc.

K. Valerie Green

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
To the Santa Barbara City Council Members:

I support the goal of making Santa Barbara more affordable. Housing costs are a real challenge for families, workers, seniors, and young people throughout our community.

My concern is that the City is moving forward with a significant new regulatory program without first collecting the data necessary to understand whether it will solve the problem it is intended to address.

The City estimates that approximately 13,000 rental units will be affected by this ordinance. Yet we do not appear to know who owns those units, how long tenants have lived there, how many tenants are actually rent-burdened, or how many households have been displaced due to rent increases.

Those are not minor details. They are fundamental questions.

We are being asked to support a permanent policy before establishing the baseline information needed to measure whether it succeeds or fails.

I am also concerned that this ordinance focuses primarily on people who already have housing while offering little relief to those still trying to find it. The teacher considering a job in Santa Barbara. The nurse relocating to our community. The young family trying to stay near parents and grandparents. The recent graduate hoping to build a future here.

What does this ordinance do for them?

Before creating a new bureaucracy costing millions of dollars annually, I urge the Council to demonstrate how this policy will improve housing opportunities not only for current residents, but also for future residents.

Santa Barbara deserves housing policies grounded in evidence, transparency, and measurable outcomes. We should collect the facts before deciding on the solution.

Sincerely,

Pam Tanase

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear City Council,

I urge you to vote “No” on the Rent Stabilization Ordinance.

1) It is **financially irresponsible** to start a new $2 million program, initially using **emergency reserves**. To quote Councilwoman Kristen Sneddon “On what planet are we making further purchases?”

A. The City as already depleted its contingency reserves, using it in part to fund affordable housing projects. The City’s financial plan calls for $2 million to to go to the local housing trust fund in 2027 which helps low and middle-income residents, but City Staff has recommended only paying $1 million into the fund because of the budget. This fund finances affordable rental and homeownership housing for low to moderate-income working families, single parents, and others. This is exactly the demographic you are trying to help with rent stabilization.

B. It is punitive to expect each targeted unit to pay $150 or more ($2,000,000/13,000) while imposing a rental cap of 60 percent of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or 3 percent, whichever is less in any given year.

2) Rent control policies often lead to **unintended consequences.** *

A. **A divided housing market** between long-term tenants and newcomers. Both high- and low-income households receive similar lower rents. In many cases, more educated and wealthier tenants benefit disproportionately from rent control.*

B. **Higher rents** in unregulated units. In New York and Los Angeles, rents in unregulated units were found to be 22 to 25 percent higher than they would have been without rent control.*

C. **Loss of housing** as owners convert their properties to short term rentals or condominiums. For example: Casa Iglesia, a 100-year-old church, was evaluated for housing (each unit has a full kitchen), but “it determined that a hotel made better sense for the building.”

3) It **unfairly targets** buildings with three or more units **built before 1995** only.

A. The 30-year old State law (1995 Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act) needs to be repealed or amended. It was meant to protect new construction when it was written, but now it restricts local governments from enacting rent control for almost half of the rental units in the area, including multi-family developments, single-family homes, condominiums and accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

B. For owners of 1995 and older apartments, rent stabilization not only compounds loss of income over time, it decreases property values and makes it harder to sell to individuals. It favors developers who are willing to demolish existing housing and build new housing not subject to rent control. The rich get richer. The middle gets pushed out.

Thank you for your consideration of these important facts,

Susan Tara Brown

- Calma, Emilia. "What we know about rent control and its impact on housing". Wilkes Initiative for Housing Policy at the D.C. Policy Center, August 1, 2025. Available at: https://www.dcpolicycenter.org/publications/rent-control-lit-review-2025/#easy-footnote-bottom-24-12090

- Early, D. (2000). Rent Control, Rental Housing Supply, and the Distribution of Tenant Benefits. Journal of Urban Economics 48(2): 185-204.

I am opposed to government controls on rents.

Joel Crosby

Our city isn't qualified to interfere with market forces with respect to rental housing and lease agreements. And government has collectively overspent approved budgets. Just stop.

Eric Olsen

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Hello,

I am a landlord trying very hard to provide quality, responsible housing. I am proactive in my upkeep and want a nice place for families to grow up.

I have service providers and insurance that are continually raising their prices, and I cannot afford to keep up without raising the rents. I will have to stop the pest control, or the gardener, or the tree trimmer, or..............

If I have no funds with which to service the units they will deteriorate rapidly. Then the city will have sub par housing along with shortages. Please, keep in mind that the vast majority of us are trying to do the right thing.

Please don't handcuff us so that we can't offer the services we do for our tenants.

Thank you.

Karen Schloss Heimberg

The topic of rent stabilization should not even be on the table. Impacting those who are already stuck within a broken economy by trying to change their income needs from rental properties is biased and unfair. The target for any kind of rent legislation should be around the whole miss concept of low income housing. We have an enormity of new units being built everywhere. The portion that are available to low-income renters should be taken to task. But more importantly the idea of calling them low income when that standard is so outdated and near irrelevant is a much greater issue. Let's put our legislative efforts towards stopping big developers from continuing to drive up the base of rental costs in our community and truly make more of these new units accessible to those who are serve our community in education, healthcare, first responders, and the countless families that call Santa Barbara home that can begin to touch the cost of rents.

Rent Control or as you prefer to call it, “Rent Stabilization”, is bad for landlords, bad for tenants and bad for the economy.

What an unjust and unfair thing to impose on one sector.

Owners of property are being penalized for being in the wrong industry.

It is understood that people need decent and affordable places to live. However, it is not the fault of property owners for the high cost of housing.

Instead of targeting the mom and pops who own the majority of rental housing, why not focus on the real reasons and other just as important areas of high costs?

Why not limit the exorbitant insurance costs landlords must pay?

Also, what about medical bills & health insurance, food costs, or gas prices?

There are so many areas that could be “controlled”, so why does one particular group get singled out to foot the bill for this larger problem?

Rent Stabilization in WRONG.

Andy Barrad

I would strongly oppose a total ban on rent increases. It would encourage landlords to not renew leases to existing tenants in order to rerent to a new tenant at a higher rent . A cap of 5 or 7 percent would be reasonable and in keeping with inflation and increases in property taxes, insurance and utilities. Dika Golovatchoff. I have a small rental unit on my property which has allowed me to live in my retirement.

Dika Golovatchoff

Why don't you just take our property since you just assume you can do anything you want with it. Who's going to pay all the recurring fees, property taxes,home owner's insurance, utilities, fix it costs gardening, repairs, depreciation, mortgage payments, flood insurance. Is the city going to pay that? What about all the city bond payments? Why don't you just seize my checking and savings account while you are at it. How are you going to stop property owners from collecting rent? This act is the worst government overreach I've ever seen. You people have smoked too much hokum. There's no such thing as affordable housing anymore. Try building anything affordable with today's structural codes,permit fees, and material costs. Why would anyone want to create housing here or maintain anything with this bs

attempt to control a market with artificial rules. It's never worked and historically it has created disastrous unintended consequences.

Rob Hay

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Rent Stabilization has within its very name, its own demise. The intent of the program is to artificially stop the increases to residential rents which have been increasing nationwide. However several aspects of a rental environment are damaged if stabilized in this way.

Sociology regarding Habitat identifies Filtering and Mobility as integral to a healthy housing economy. New arrivals to market often begin renting older stock and Filter upwards as earnings increase, as families enlarge and responsibilities change. They would normally transition to newer larger rentals, with some also buying. Seniors have less need for their larger places and also must leave unsafe stairs and hazards considered normal to others. But the 'frozen' costs entice the young to stay and take advantage. This blocks newcomers from access. And elders will forgo healthier choices, increasing personal dangers.

When jobs or fortunes change the aspect of finding better jobs and/or more affordable regions through Mobility become constrained by an artificially 'Stabilized' program. The existing stock, closed to new entries now promotes less options to City workers who commute and cannot find affordable SB housing.

Nothing is improved or solved by invoking financial motivation to impede these normal Sociological processes. The rentals occupied at the start become frozen. The shortage is only increased.

Oppose

Thanks, David

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Note: This may be a repeat copy to the Council. It is being entered into the Public Comment area with this email. (Thx D)

The rapid rise in housing prices across the country is the result of a housing supply deficit in the U.S, recently estimated at over 4 million needed homes; Defense Opinion, June 2025.

Realtor.com quotes more specifically at 4.03 million are needed now, and also that the look and nature of these domiciles will require reform to truly fulfill the need. And we have been through this before, rather recently too.

The returning soldiers from WW2 came home to find we were short 2.5 million homes in 1947. "From foxholes to shacks!! We had more room in the foxholes" was the protest slogan.

It was a two-sided crisis as financing was not available yet on such a scale. The G.I. Bill and innovations to the mortgage industry quickly came about, and that still operates much the same today.

Housing starts rose from just 326,000 units in 1945 to more than 1 million annually after the war, peaking at roughly 2 million in 1950 according to housing historian Alexander von Hoffman. The innovators of Levittown introduced the new concept of production line building. One set of plans and a team of specialists who hopped from lot to lot across Planned Urban Development sites. They cranked out completed houses in 6 to 12 weeks from start to move-in. Soon the one-two approaches of financing and availability directly addressed this shortage, and the soldiers moved from parents' homes, from shacks, tents and YMCA's into these new starter homes.

As time passed, these 'Ticky Tacky' – the 'little boxes in a row' song by Pete Seegar, these were derided in spite of the solution it presented. Individual improvements were devised to add personal touches later, which helped thier acceptance. But quoting from Realtor.com, "If America wants more affordable options, it may need to accept homes that are more standardized and less tied to old ideas of what housing should look like."

And some changes were cultural in another way, as SRO's, or Single Room Occupancies, which once housed as much as 10% of starter home people began dying away in the 1950's. Check out Kim Novak and Fredric March in 1959 'The Middle of the Night'. Santa Barbara County actually tried to outlaw non-family households in 1980 but was rebuked by the California Supreme Court. Starter home abodes have been thinned out over time by culture changes, zoning ordinances and aesthetics at large.

An easy way to see what an effective but minimal dwelling once looked like is to watch the 1939 'It Happened One Night' with Clark Gable and Claudet Colbert and see the motel cabin they stayed in one night. Open studs and a bare burner stove. They weather the pouring rain outside and she stands in line for a shower that morning. But they slept soundly, happily, fell in love, he shaved and they ate their single egg each in the morning warm and dry. All in a bare clapboard but good roof little box really.

Aesthetics may seem arbitrary and inconsequential, but it can affect public leaders and influence area zoning rules and design standards, and before long you can find that as a community and part of this 4.03 million housing unit shortage in America, we are part of the problem and not part of the solution.

Global Warming, thankfully now being looked at for viability, has caused the costs of building to skyrocket. The expenses on both the consumer side of meeting building standards and the taxpaying side of government mandating and managing excessive criteria are factors in causing less housing. Both experiences make what does get built more expensive to build, own and rent out, and both sides need looking at.

The IPCC International Panel on Climate Change recently removed the Emergency status from Global Warming, and NPR National Public Radio, the Washington Post and NBC have all closed their Climate Desks accordingly. As this fades into the past the demands that simple buildings in California must be insulated like they were in Vermont and also heated with electricity (highest rates in the nation) directly contributes to the housing shortage and inflated costs.

What is needed is useful, safe housing without frills or complications, that can be built quickly and cheaply, providing fast and less expensive housing for this current shortage. A few modern improvements regarding safety are indispensable of course and individual touches can always be added later. But feelings, aesthetics and fitting in cannot house anyone. In 1982, 40% of new home stock was under 1400sf (considered starter home criteria). In 2023 it had dropped to 9% (CNBC).

Blaming landlords who are maintaining our current stock while we wait for this housing to arrive is blaming the hot surface without addressing the fire below. Once this needed housing is completed all will have homes and the ‘starter home’ economy can be reestablished and affordable again. This may be the ultimate in ‘less is more’.

Thanks, David

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
I oppose the proposed Rent Stabilization Ordinances. Extensive economic research confirms that rent control creates a lottery system that benefits a few at the expense of the broader community. It actively suppresses the construction of new housing, reduces the overall rental supply, and leads to the long-term deterioration of existing properties. To lower housing costs across Santa Barbara, the city must incentivize development to meet demand, rather than adopting counterproductive price controls that history shows will only stifle it.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Behl

There are several reasons why I do not support the Rent Stabilization Ordinance.

The city CANNOT financially afford it. Two million dollars, or whatever the actual costs is, is not a productive use of our taxpayer dollars. Several city counsel members claim to have not been told they were burning through reserves, but as little as I follow what is going on at the counsel level, I was aware of what you were doing when you started funding the Local Housing Trust and hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on multiple studies on what to do about State Street as well as other money pits.

We don't need more bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is killing our city. There are so many laws and rules that a day doesn't go by that a responsible member of our community doesn't break one of them.

In many ways, Santa Barbara is paradise, although some might think it has already on the road to ruin. Not everyone can afford to live here. Years ago while going through my mother-in-laws collection of Santa Barbara history documents, I found a newspaper clipping from the late 1960's about the high cost of housing in the city. It has always been that way, and it always will be. You cannot build your way out of it. You will only ruin the city while attempting to do it.

In the early 1980's my husband and I thought the cost of living here was not worth it, and we moved to Washington state where we were able to buy a new home on a half acre lot. A few years later, we decided to return to Santa Barbara and buy an older small home on a small lot in Santa Barbara. The sacrifice was worth the loss of creature comforts. As we watch and foresee the changes in our hometown, if we were younger we would seriously consider leaving Santa Barbara.

During the pandemic people from the north and the south escaped large cities because they did not feel safe, and then stayed. Tourist come to our city to experience a brief reprieve from urban life. Fire victims from the south have relocated here, and many have decided to stay. We will never be able to build enough housing for everyone who wants to live here. At the same time, the crushing amount of proposed housing will take away what makes it desirable.

If there are bad players in the landlord pool, we have many laws available to protect tenants. There just needs to be ways to enforce it while not penalizing those that play be the existing rules and treat their tenants with respect. It is very expensive to buy a property here, and there are many risks associated with property ownership. I am a former landlord who was repeatedly disrespected and abused by tenants. Landlords deserve respect and a fair return on their investment. Both landlords and tenants will bear the cost of this ordinance. It is a lose lose proposition.

Sarah Griffin

Dear City Council

These regulations will lead to a deteriorating housing stock as no landlord will continue to invest in an asset class, where income is not even keeping up with **inflation** !!!

So the longer the ordinance would be in place, the more money any landlord would lose, leading to lower investments if at all and a deteriorating housing stock with lower quality of service to the tenants. On top of that, our beautiful Santa Barbara city would be experiencing more and more badly maintained buildings which eventually will be a safety concerns to all of Santa Barbarians.

I am sure, the SB City Council does not want that, so please vote NO on this Ordinance.

There are many more alternative solutions to help lower income families in SB as demonstrated in numerous cities around California.

Sincerely

Michael Probstel

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
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I do not know of one analytical piece of evidence that suggests this effort will materially impact the affordability of housing in Santa Barbara. And I do not know one independent financial professional or economist who thinks it will.

It seems more like an emotional response to a complicated problem than an analytical one.

Importantly, the Ordinance pits one part of our community against another and I think that is a mistake. We need to work together to figure this out, not point fingers or make enemies of our neighbors.

Thank you for asking for our input.

Brian Fahnestock

To whom it may concern:

Rent stabilization will affect the entire Santa Barbara community of roughly 87,000 residents. A decision of this magnitude should be made by the people through a ballot measure, not by seven councilmembers alone.

David Silvas

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Hello,

I have many issues with this ordinance, mostly from a philosophical and moralistic perspective. While I am a landlord and may or may not be affected by this, I think this ordinance is wrongfully putting the burden of a community wide issue on the shoulders (and wallets) of the few. My rental property is my retirement income. Why is my retirement income being targeted for subsidizing the rent of my tenants, who I might add make more money than me, while everyone else's chosen retirement investments are not. Why is the burden of supporting the renters in this town, again people who often make more than I do, fall on just the folks that chose to invest in real estate, as opposed to the whole community, regardless of where they have their retirement savings invested?

I am all for subsidizing housing for folks who wouldn't be able to afford to live in Santa Barbara. I just don't think that it is fair for the few of us who made the decision in years prior to any hint of these kind of restrictions being made, to be forced to shoulder the burden for the whole community at large.

And to restrict the increases to less than inflation is just the cherry on top. Not only does it interfere with the free market, it requires loads of extra costs to the community as a whole to enforce these unnatural restrictions on the free market, which will require more and more legislation to plug loopholes, thus adding even more costs to our community as a whole.

Let the free market do its job. Or at the very least, stop forcing a small segment of the population to subsidize housing out of their retirement savings.

-Chris

Bad idea. Creates a privileged class. Discourages proper maintenance. Can't fight market forces.

--

Regards,
Robert C. Meltzer

Please consider that land owners have to upgrade their properties especially those that were built before 1995. With a rent limit of only 1/2 of the CPI or 3% each year whichever is lower, you are creating slum housing that will be in bad repair and certainly not up to Santa Barbara standards. Santa Barbara is an expensive community. I have lived here for almost 70 years. Landlords need to be able to make upgrades and renovations.

Property tax, insurance, maintenance fees and Mangement fees are also going up. How is an apartment owner supposed to support all there costs with a CPI increase of 1/2 per year? It doesn't make business sense to own an older apartment or rental building in Santa Barbara. New owners will not want to buy an older apartment building and so the buildings will fall into disrepair as the developers make huge sums of money building new units.

My suggestion is to keep the current policy aligned with California State and require new development to have more than only 10 percent affordable housing in the new development projects. 30% affordable housing at the minimum! That's where the change needs to happen not to the smaller property owners with older units.

City planning and city council needs to stand up to these big out of town developers like the Taylor group with La Cumbre Plaza. They are planning much more than that Project to take advantage of our beautiful community!

Respectfully

Jeanette Webber

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

Dear Mayor and Members of the Santa Barbara City Council,

As you prepare to discuss the proposed Residential Rent Stabilization Ordinance, I urge you to carefully consider the long-term, unintended consequences this policy will have on housing quality, housing supply, and the local housing providers who work hard to maintain it.

I speak from deep personal experience. I am a small housing provider who has owned a duplex in Santa Barbara for over 40 years. I am not a faceless corporation; I am a member of this community providing a home for other people. Over the last four decades, I have taken pride in maintaining my property, but the reality of keeping up a safe, quality rental home has become increasingly difficult and expensive.

Every single cost associated with property maintenance has skyrocketed. My plumber and electrician cost significantly more than they used to. General repairs, materials, and property taxes continue to rise. Furthermore, we are facing new local burdens, such as the proposed Wildfire Assessment Fee, which itself can increase by up to 4% annually.

Under the proposed rent control laws, housing providers are being asked to absorb 100% of these rapidly escalating costs without the ability to pass them on proportionally. If rent caps do not even keep up with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and real-world inflation, the math simply does not work.

The Unintended Consequences of Strict Rent Stabilization:

· **Declining Housing Quality:** When operational costs far outpace allowable rent increases, housing providers lose the financial ability to fund major capital improvements, plumbing overhauls, and electrical upgrades.

· **Reduced Housing Supply:** Onerous regulations discourage reinvestment and may force long-term, small-scale owners to sell their properties, often to larger corporate entities or developers who may convert them, further reducing naturally occurring affordable housing.

Policies must be balanced and data-driven. Small housing providers deserve a seat at the table, and any proposed ordinance should exempt owners of fewer than 5 or 10 units. We need solutions that support *both* tenants and housing providers. If providing housing becomes an unsustainable financial burden, small owners like myself will not be able to survive, and the entire Santa Barbara housing ecosystem will suffer.

I urge the Council to evaluate the long-term impacts of this ordinance on housing availability and quality. Please ensure that local, independent housing providers remain a meaningful part of this conversation.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and consideration of this crucial matter.

Sincerely,

Mary Almo

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
My comments:

1. Not everyone can afford to live in the nicest city in the country. Trying to make it that way by government action is like trying to repeal gravity.

2. Cooperate with ICE in removing all people who do not have the legal right to reside in the country. That will relieve some pressure on housing and rents and is the right thing to do in any case.

3. Find places in the area to build more housing and zone appropriately. At some point, decide you don't want more housing and congestion and let rents adjust accordingly.

4. Socialism never works in the long run. Rent control will lead to reduced housing availability, supply, and maintenance over time, making the problem and the available housing worse.

I read nothing in the proposed ordinance in the half I could stand to read that reflected an understanding of these simple and nearly self-evident truths. The entire measure should be rejected.

Regards,

Tim Sasseen

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Rent Stabilization concerns

- higher rents for future tenants

- higher rents for non-stabilized units

- stealth subletting at market rates

- greater use of single family homes for rentals

- conversions from duplexes to owner occupied duplexes

- increased demolition of older housing stock

The ordinance should contain a sunset date.

Section 3:

“this Ordinance has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment “

An analysis should be done to address whether the ordinance will result in increased commuter traffic to/from the City.

Steven Johnson

I would strongly encourage the Council NOT to adopt this or any other "price control" or rental ordinance until you can cite municipalities that have implemented such controls and improve the quantity and quality of rental housing.

I am also strongly against building a new administrative function to manage this process. In a time where budgets are tight or trending to negative, spending more for a function that can not demonstrably prove (from other municipalities) that it will increase the quality and quantity of rental units.

Your objective of helping constituents is understood, but this is a path that has not worked where it has been tried, and will not accomplish an improvement in quantity or quality of rental housing.

Thank you.

--

Russ Sharer

Rent control is a terrible mistake for our community. I have friends leaving Santa Barbara because their rent was jacked on April 30 as local landlords prepared for this ordinance - fearing the inability and agency to control the rent they will be able to charge under this new ordinance - so they raised rents while they could.

I am so frustrated with Santa Barbara. Also, please open State Street with two car lanes and two bike lanes. We did it at the bottom of the street - now let’s take that all the way up! I am aware of the $60 million plan to do otherwise. I watched the city council presentation. Not our solution!

I live, work and walk downtown. All of the empty spaces make me nuts. And we decided to paint the windows and keep the street closed. We’re smarter than all of this!

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Kristen Desmond

If you stabilize rents SB project on the SEARS project and La Cumbre Plaza housing projects for housing will probably not be affordable for developers. They have been investing $ for years trying to get a project done for all. With the high cost of tariff materials, slow red tape , labor workers to build being taken away. Developers see no profit margin good enough for their hard work and risks. Which is why SB has a huge housing shortage.

Melissa Riparetti-Stepien

Hello, I own rentals in Oxnard where they have passed such policies.

Because, after a tenant moves out and I can't raise the rent to market rate for a new tenant, I have to raise the rent each year.

This, infract, is the opposite of rent stability.

Thank you,

Chris johnson

Rent control has never worked anywhere in the world. Try real economics—sensible supply growth. The facts are clear—supply goes up, prices go down.

And note the word “sensible”. There are many good projects being built around the county, but building an ugly/massive project like behind the mission isn’t one of them.

Kirk Greene

Santa Barbara, CA

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
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This is not a good idea. Landlords have a lot of expenses that fluctuate and are very high right now. The city should not put limits. The rent is controlled by the market. Just like communism doesn't work but sounds good in theory, this theory will not play out well in real life. Bad idea. Markets play out on their own and do now need government interference. No rent control. Very bad idea!! Government should stay out of private businesses.

Hi,

I'm not a fan of rent control/stabilization or low income housing requirements in general. I believe isolating housing prices from market forces actually reduces the housing supply. This is the opposite of what's needed.

Thanks for listening!

Regards,

Chris Weddle

I have lived in Santa Barbara for 40 years rent prices here have always been very high by trying to change the way the system works will only end up with millions of dollars spent on lawsuits defending and less property rentals available to the public.

Santa Barbara is probably one of the most beautiful places in the world to live thus the high rents this is a huge mistake and I guarantee it will backfire. Renters supporting this are basically just looking for an easy way out.

When I moved here I had to work two jobs to be able to afford to live here working hard it allowed me an opportunity to buy a house I never asked for any assistance from the city of Santa Barbara I think both of these measures are a horrible idea that will only cost me a Santa Barbara taxpayer more money to defend something that should never happen.

Please do not waste my tax dollar money on either of these two initiatives that are only going to go to court

Thank you very much for an opportunity to voice my opinion

Steve

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
I want to register my support for NOT implementing and proceeding with the proposed ordinance.

Staff and council have already received substantiated input and data that the proposed ordinance will have negative and unintended consequences.

Please have the courage to listen to the experts and work with through the other solutions that address supply and demand and particularly improving the permit process.

Regards

Carolle Van Sande

Dear Santa Barbara City Council Members and the Rent Stabilization Task Force:

I am writing as a longtime Santa Barbara housing provider who has owned and managed rental housing in this community for more than 30 years. I also hold a degree in Business Economics from UCSB and have spent decades working directly with tenants, maintaining older properties, and navigating the realities of housing in Santa Barbara.

I understand and respect the concern over housing affordability. It is a real issue, and many residents are struggling. However, I strongly believe that rent stabilization, while politically appealing in the short term, will ultimately create unintended consequences that make Santa Barbara's housing problems worse over time.

The primary beneficiaries of rent stabilization will be current tenants fortunate enough to already have housing. But the cost of that benefit will largely fall on future renters — the people trying to move to Santa Barbara, young workers, families, teachers, nurses, and others searching for available housing.

The likely long-term effects are predictable and well documented reflected in all publicly available economic analysis:

• Reduction in available rental housing
Owners become less willing to rent units long term when regulations continue to increase while flexibility and financial viability decrease. Some properties are sold, converted, redeveloped differently, or removed from the rental market entirely.

• Higher prices for available rentals
When supply decreases and turnover slows dramatically, the remaining available units become even more competitive and expensive. Ironically, policies intended to lower housing costs often increase market rents for newcomers.

• Reduced renovation and reinvestment
Santa Barbara contains many aging buildings that require constant upkeep and major capital improvements. As returns become increasingly restricted and uncertain, owners naturally delay or scale back expensive renovations. Over time, housing quality declines.

• Increased tension between landlords and tenants
The current system generally works best when both parties cooperate voluntarily. Heavy regulation changes the relationship from cooperative to adversarial. It encourages legal conflict, strategic behavior, and distrust on both sides.

• Growth of informal and black-market subletting
When below-market units become economically valuable assets, tenants often hold onto them indefinitely and may illegally sublet rooms or units at higher prices. This creates hidden occupancy, reduced accountability, and unfairness to both property owners and prospective renters trying to enter the market legitimately.

• Reduced mobility and inefficient use of housing
Rent-controlled systems discourage people from moving even when their housing no longer matches their needs. Larger units become occupied by fewer people for long periods while families searching for space cannot find housing.

I would also ask the Council to consider the financial realities and risks that small housing providers already face.

Last year, I experienced a tragedy at one of my apartments when a tenant died in the unit due to a chronic long term illness. Beyond the emotional toll on everyone involved, including neighbors and management, the remediation and odor mitigation costs exceeded $30,000 entirely out of pocket. There was extensive cleaning, restoration, repainting, and professional mitigation required before the apartment could safely and respectfully be rented again.

These are the kinds of unexpected realities that do not get discussed in policy debates. Small and midsize housing providers absorb enormous costs and risks that are often invisible to the public. Insurance costs continue to rise dramatically, maintenance and labor expenses have surged, and major renovations on older Santa Barbara buildings are becoming increasingly difficult to financially justify.

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
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As someone who has managed housing for decades, I can say that most small and midsize housing providers in Santa Barbara are not large corporations. Many are local families who invested their savings into maintaining housing in this community. Policies that continually increase regulation and uncertainty discourage exactly the kind of long-term ownership and stewardship that Santa Barbara should want to encourage.

Housing affordability will not be solved by discouraging investment in rental housing. The only sustainable long-term solution is increasing housing supply, streamlining construction and renovation, encouraging reinvestment, and creating policies that support both tenants and responsible housing providers.

I respectfully ask the Council and the taskforce to carefully consider the long-term consequences of rent stabilization policies before imposing regulations that may feel beneficial today but ultimately reduce housing availability, worsen affordability, and damage the overall health of Santa Barbara's rental market.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark and Michelle Meinzer

Santa Barbara Housing Provider for 30+ Years

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Mayor, City Council Members and City Staff

Here are my comments regarding the proposed/draft of a City Ordinance for Rent Stabilization.

First I want to state that I am a resident and homeowner, and not a renter or landlord. My comments reflect some basic issues and questions that should be addressed before approving and implementing such an ordinance. Having lived in other cities, and having previously been a landlord of rental units, I have studied this topic to some degree and know that it is very difficult to balance the short term benefits with some overall adverse effects to a community.

Here are issues that should be considered and/or addressed:

1.) The city faces real financial challenges over the next few years. Currently, the city contingency reserves have been depleted. We face great risks if there is an emergency - such as fires, heavy rains and mudslides, etc.. There's a lot of uncertainty in the economy (inflation, diminishing government funding, reductions in funding resources, a variable travel industry, and local economy), and increasing costs to the city (e.g., pensions, insurance).

Is this the right time to implement a complex rent stabilization program with a projected cost of $2 million dollars? Although the program fees are projected to pay this, how can we assure that we can afford this, as it is likely the overall costs of managing this program, as it grows in complexity (# units, compliance issues, enforcements, legal battles?), will only grow and become more costly to sustaining the benefits.

2.) After reading the proposed/draft ordinance, I was struck by the heavy reliance on the Rent Stabilization Board, a group of volunteers, with enormous oversight responsibility. It will be difficult to assure that the Board members will be diverse enough and bring a totality of the expertise that will be needed. Will/can such a structure assure adequate oversight of the program and compliance issues, especially in a potentially highly litigious environment?

3.) Many studies of rent stabilization have reported that, although it is very effective in keeping rents from increasing in the designated units, there are adverse effects overall. The Brookings Institute (2021), The Network for Public Health Law (2021) and the Journal of Housing Economics (2024), among others, have all reported the following:

a.) there is a decline in the overall housing supply and in the quality of restricted housing;

b.) revenues are reduced for landlords while they face economic challenges (e.g., inflation, increases in taxes and insurance, costs of repairs) - leading to a reduction in restricted units, a reduction in overall rental availability, and a decline in the building of new rental units;

c.) there is a reduction in the fluidity/mobility of the overall rental/housing market; and,

d.) the resources/costs needed to oversee a rent stabilization program can be difficult to design, to implement, and to successfully maintain - this additional bureaucracy will be burdensome and costly.

So my final questions are: do we have enough data and assurance that implementing this new ordinance will not result in these effects? Do we have built-in countermeasures to prevent them? If not, do we need more time to assess?

We may end up helping some indeed, which of course we all agree is very important, while at the same time driving up affordability and costs in other ways, which we cannot afford. This program will not be happening in a vacuum - the city will face continuing challenges if costs exceed revenues while we steadily refund the reserves. The solution that is always suggested is obvious but difficult to do - we need more affordable housing now. It would be wonderful to see the city leadership present concrete actions that are being taken, and the plans going forward, for making it easier and incentivising investment, in the production of new housing, and conversion of existing structures to new affordable housing. Demonstrate a sense of urgency so constituents will see that actions are being taken. When we increase the supply, the market will adjust housing and rental prices. Our community and economy will grow.

Thank you for considering my comments, and thank you, for all that you do to lead and protect our city and our quality of life.

Respectfully submitted,

Cecilia Harris

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
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Dear City Council - in the long term, rent stabilization/control will not solve the housing situation, but make them worse. Short term financial relief gives way to long term problems.

There are no cities where rent stabilization/control has made a long term positive impact.

Most Santa Barbara landlords are "mom and pop" operations, not big business. The cost to administer your rent stabilization program is not sustainable.

Thanks, Tim.

I do not agree with rent stabilization, it will have unintended consequences and is illegal and unfair to landlords. The proposed rate increase will not cover landlords increases in expenses, so why the discrimination of one group of citizens?

What could be fair is to tie the rate of increase to real factors that affect rental costs like the City's utility rate increases, property tax increases, home insurance increases (my home insurance went up 33% this year). Or the city should purchase land/apartments/houses and rent them out at a substandard rate (and I think history has shown how badly this concept turns out.....). Kim

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
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To Whom it May Concern,

As a small landlord in Santa Barbara, I implore you to please consider both sides of this important issue before you do irreparable harm to the very people you say you want to protect.

I work hard to maintain a desirable property. When there is an issue, my property manager and I are immediately on top of it. Because we strive to keep our units well cared for, our margins on this property on Padre Street are very modest. Even a single vacancy in my 11 unit, 1960's building can significantly impact our finances. As a retiree, I effectively get paid *last* in order to maintain my tenants living quarters to the standard they deserve.

Please do not ignore the reality of a local landlord who bears all the costs of operation, costs that only go up, with no hope of "stabilizing" their expenses. The actions you are contemplating will inevitably result in a lower standard of care and upkeep that will affect everyone, not just an apartment owner's meager cash flow, but the quality of life of their tenants as well.

Don't take the easy political route to please your most vocal constituents. They want a quick fix. But you know better that freezing rents will hurt them more in the long run.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Robert

--

Robert C. Duncan, CFP

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
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Dear RSO committee,

I was a very happy landlord with many happy tenants for the last 34 years. Rents rarely went up and tenants stayed for years and as long as they wanted. Everybody was happy including the tenants.

About 2018 the news was definitely indicating that the city intended to change my relationship with my happy tenants into an adversarial relationship. This with rent control talk, just cause talk, mandated rent term periods, and many other gnawing rules.

Suddenly, tenants stopped being nice and normal and became aggressive and adversarial. There was no reason for this to happen. Nobody was doing anything to these formerly happy people including charging too much or not maintaining things.

As I could see the tide changing I legally and methodically disposed of the suddenly troublesome tenants, raised the rents as much as possible legally since it was clear that I needed to keep up and not let my rents fall behind since I would not be able to catch up after someone vacated on their own time schedule.

Finally as the city just kept getting more and more aggressive with the ways they could think of to deprive me of my asset, I just started shedding off the rental properties. Everything was ideal for a first time homeowner so somebody benefited but those spaces were permanently removed from the rental rolls since the young families weren't renting out but living in the units.

You think you have the right to seize the property but you don't. You are currently getting away with it you think but the landlords who were providing long term fair priced housing have left the arena.

It's really a shame, I was well liked by my tenants for over 25 years.

You just don't support landlords and you think you can force people to participate in your theft of real property but your position only makes rentals more scarce and more expensive.

I know you don't care but you are only compounding the problem and seem impervious to learning cause and effect.

Formerly a happy landlord,

Kathy Mora

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
I think it is an over reach of the city of Santa Barbara to intact rent control. A few reasons for this is the city has no problem increasing water rates by far greater than what they say property owners are allowed. While staying the reason is operational cost has gone up and cost of parts. The main reason we have limited housing in Santa Barbara is because of failed city policies that limit growth of development unless you have money to sue the city for obstructing state laws. Trash cost went up more than the projected amount allowed. These are just a few examples of the rules for thee but not for thee. If you are going to require something of citizens. Then you should lead by example. But time after time you prove that these rules are not for you. And I get it it's easy to spend someone else's money. It's about time you lead by example.

Jeff Beardsmore

Tenants deserve a home that's not broken down or unsafe. This rent stabilization for not incorpoare economic factors incident the raising cost of insurance along with the mandates to replace roof, remove vegitstion and the fact that most every property in SB is older than 1970 requiring new sewer, water lines and electrical panels. These need to be factored into the cost increases. Additionally, we want to be good neighbors and keep rentals painted, landscape trimmed and more. Based on the numbers, if a home or multi unit apartment building was purchased in the last 10 years the property tax alone makes it difficult to make a profit on a rental. And if there's no incentive to provide housing - because none want to work for free - then we end up with not enough housing. The very thing we are trying to improve.

Finally, look at the housing market - today. Using old data to push the rental cap is causing the city to possibly adopt when it's not necessary.

Lynn Robinson

Re: The annual general adjustment will be equal to 60% of annual percentage change in the Consumer Price Index or 3%, whichever is less.

The title of the proposed ordinance is inaccurate. The ordinance is not a "stabilization", where the rental adjustments would mirror the CPI, but is in effect a 'Rent Reduction Ordinance".

Donald E. Polk

There is overwhelming evidence that rent controls do not work. In addressing the problem was any consideration given to studying cities that took a different and successful approach to the issue? If not, perhaps this effort should be rejected while those in charge explore different and successful ways.

I am a renter in Santa Barbara, we moved here from new york about 10 years ago. What I can tell you from my direct experience with rent stabilization is that it removes housing units from the supply pool which ultimately leads to higher rents. In NY, when we were trying to rent it was so challenging because many of the landlords there were better off keeping the units vacant than renting them with the rent stabilization rules. The rent stabilization rules dis-incentivized landlord to make improvements to the properties and to rent them. Many units were converted to short term rentals or other uses. I see this happen all the time here in santa barbara as well were landlords decide they can make more money by putting their units on AirBnb, etc. This ordinance if adopted would undoubtedly drive landlords to explore other options like short term rentals and would incentivize landlords to not make improvements to their properties. As a renter, I've seen the unintended consequences in real life of similar measures to this, and I'm speaking out against it.

thank you.

--

LANCE FRAME

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

To my knowledge no rent control implemented anywhere has had the desired effect of reducing rents more than just for a short time. And then rents go up even more because developers do not provide additional housing. They won't when profits are not available. Yes housing costs are increasing rapidly for both buyers and renters. That is because supply is vastly insufficient. Don't put in rent control. Instead get more housing built. Stop trying to force developers to build for low income renters. Set aside land just for that type of construction. Let developers build for people who can and will pay for it. Stop interfering so much with building. Let them build. Use land allocations to achieve social goals for housing costs. Let builders create cheaper housing for lower rents/prices and let middle and upper income supply free.

Lester Hendrickson

Santa Barbara

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Members of the Santa Barbara City Council,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed permanent **Rent Stabilization Ordinance** currently under public review. While the goal of protecting tenants is understandable, economic consensus and historical data show that strict rent caps—such as the proposed limit of 3% or 60% of CPI—ultimately devastate the local housing market.

Adopting this ordinance will hinder Santa Barbara's housing market in several critical ways:

- **Reduces Housing Supply:** Capping rental income disincentivizes developers from building new residential units, worsening our city's long-term housing shortage.
- **Decreases Housing Quality:** Reduced profitability forces housing providers to delay or cancel essential maintenance, leading to the gradual deterioration of existing housing stock.
- **Drives Unit Conversions:** Landlords are incentivized to convert apartments into condominiums or remove them from the market entirely under the Ellis Act to bypass heavy restrictions.
- **Reduces Tenant Mobility:** A restrictive cap creates a "lock-in" effect where tenants remain in units that no longer fit their needs simply to keep their artificial rate, preventing natural market turnover.
- **Increases Unregulated Rents:** Shrinking the overall rental supply will artificially push up prices for non-stabilized units, unfairly penalizing future residents and younger generations trying to move here.

Instead of creating an expensive, bureaucratic **Rent Stabilization Board** and registry that will suppress supply, the City should focus on policies that encourage housing construction, streamline production, and offer targeted financial subsidies. Please protect Santa Barbara's long-term housing health and reject this ordinance.

Sincerely,

Corey Anderson

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

This rent control is unfair to the landlords and will reduce available and new rental unit availability which has been documented in other cities that have imposed rent control. These statistics should be posted on your website to demonstrate fair disclosure.

"The annual general adjustment will be equal to 60% of annual percentage change in the Consumer Price Index or 3%, whichever is less." This is blatantly unfair to the landlords whose costs increase at the CPI rate or higher, thus reducing their profits by 40% per year. This is unconstitutional.

Prices for flood insurance and rental insurance have been rising at many times the CPI rates, how is this fair in your new ill advised rent control scheme.

Who will do improvements to their rentals when the payback is negativeOther rent control cities showed a significant degradation in rental quality due to this non-free-market rent control abortion.

Why would new rentals be established or investors build new rentals under these draconian policies? This will further reduce available rental properties, making the situation worse.

Brian Norling

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Staff, Councilors and Mayor,

I'm writing to express my concern regarding the "Rent Stabilization" measure now before the SB City Council. I believe that this will stifle our real estate market and adversely impact Santa Barbara's budget. I also believe that other tools, namely accelerated development of affordable housing is a better solution.

I also take this opportunity to express my concern that the City of Santa Barbara should do more to address its current budget shortfall. Setting savings targets (budget cuts), for all or nearly all departments will force innovation and change in a city whose budget has grown beyond its means. I make this point now because I do believe that the City of Santa Barbara should invest in affordable housing - just not via rent control.

I have lived in rent controlled communities and experienced the negative long term effects this can have on investment and resiliency.

Thank you for considering my views.

Warren Myers

Santa Barbara Home Owner

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
I won my own townhouse at 854 Via Granada, SB.

I do not own rental property in Santa Barbara.

I own rental property in Massachusetts.

I lived in Massachusetts from 1976-2000.

I lived through rent control in Boston and Brookline.

The rent control ordinance did not provide for income levels, so persons paid reduced below market rents and spent the winter months in Florida!

Properties were not maintained.

I began as a renter and my son was on "free lunches" while I pursued a master's degree. Rents in Boston were strictly controlled and the process of getting an increase was burdensome to landlords who did not make repairs unless the Health Department required. The City's rental stock suffered. I do not recall the exact dates but at some point in the 1980's (I believe) voters rejected rent control in Boston, Brookline and even Cambridge. Why? The housing stock was diminished.

Developers do not want to build housing that is regulated as such.

Note: the vast majority of property owners are fair to their tenants.

It is the few that raise rents beyond a reasonable limit.

The problem in SANTA BARBARA is the permitting and zoning that depresses adding housing. We must improve the permitting time and make it easier to get approvals for housing. It took 6 months for me to get a permit for adding air conditioning for my townhouse. My son gave up trying to get a permit for an ADU after the time and expense of the process.

Why is the burden on the property owner when the state and local authorities are responsible for the lack of supply that caused the shortage of housing? Just look at Austen, TX.

I am totally opposed because it does not work and I have lived through this only to see that after rent control was rejected Boston, Brookline and Cambridge became more livable and properties were once again maintained.

Rent control is always a tenant's answer but it is not a solution to high rents. Only supply is a solution. I know. I was a tenant and a property owner.

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance

Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

Build housing along State, Chapala , Anacapa and any area that is transit accessible and not dominated by single family homes. For example, the property development proposed behind the SB Mission is not just inappropriate for its location, massive scale and hindrance to a treasured landmark. Do not approve foolish, nonsensical plans to add housing. Build around La Cumbre. It has access to the highway and room for housing in an area that is already multifamily. I applaud the new plan for Paseo Nuevo.

Rent Stabilization or Rent control is the same with a minor difference. It is wrong and the housing stock will not recover.

Lilyan Cuttler

The estimate of housing deficits for America now tops 4 million. At the close of WW2 the soldiers returned to find a shortage of 2.5 million homes. They took up residence with parents, in shacks and at the YMCA's and protested " From foxholes to shacks, and the foxholes were bigger".

Building took precedence and Levittown began the 'ticky tacky' all the same houses on a mass scale. Builds rose from 362,00 a year in 1945 to 2 million annually in 1950.

Ten percent of starter families lived in group housing then, called SRO's (Single Room Occupancies). But this went culturally out of vogue and Santa Barbara County even tried to outlaw non-family group homes in 1982, but was reversed by the California Supreme Court.

America had 40% of new home builds at 1400 sf or less in 1982, considered starter home sizes. This has declined to 9% as of 2023. Global Warming is causing such regulations that a house cannot be built in California without insulating like it was in Vermont.

"You can't regulate your way out of a housing crisis," FHA Chief Cassidy says today. "You need to build your way out of it."

By way of culture, regulations and emergencies real or imagined, we must build, fast and cheaply. Standardized home models can always be improved later for aesthetics or upgrades, but fast production building like after WW2 is being called for.

And Rent Stabilization is like suggesting moped brakes on an 18 wheeler. It does not even understand the issue. And we do not want to stabilize where we are at. We need to build and drop rents by half, and have enough for every single renter or owner in America.

Thanks, David

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Although Santa Barbara has made some effort to help tenants, in my opinion nothing so far has been even a partial remedy.

We all know horror stories of rent control in San Francisco and New York City. That cannot be the only viable solution.

Honestly, the legalese in the 11 page amendment, not to mention the proposed rent stabilization document, is impossible to for me to understand. Perhaps 🤔 a non lawyer could interpret so we are able to earnestly review?

To my mind there are 2 classes of landlords, “professional only profit oriented” and “those with 1-2 small properties.” They should not necessarily be treated the same.

At one time there was a Rental Mediation Task Force, but I’m not sure 🤔 how much power it had to be effective? Reducing litigation needs to be a goal, although it may reduce employment of some in the legal field, change needs to occur.

I appreciate that City Counsel has finally attempted even a partial solution.

Thank you for your consideration of my

opinion and time spent.

Sincerely,

Lore Dobler

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
100% AGAINST IT!

1. Reduced housing supply over time

One of the strongest arguments is that rent control can discourage new construction.

- Developers see lower long-term returns, especially for multifamily housing.
- Existing landlords may convert rental units to condos or other uses.
- Over time, this can **reduce the overall rental supply**, which can worsen shortages.

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2. Deterioration of housing quality

When rent increases are capped:

- Landlords may have less incentive to maintain or upgrade properties.
- Profit margins shrink, especially for older buildings with high maintenance costs.
- This can lead to **gradual decline in housing quality**, particularly in regulated units.

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3. Misallocation of housing (people stay in units that don't fit their needs)

Rent control can reduce mobility:

- Long-term tenants may stay in large apartments even after household size shrinks.
- New renters struggle to find available units.
- This creates **inefficient use of housing stock** (e.g., single occupants in 3-bedroom apartments).

---

4. Higher rents in the uncontrolled market

Economists often point out a spillover effect:

- Landlords of non-controlled units raise prices to compensate for regulated units.
- New renters and recent movers can face **higher market rents** than they otherwise would.

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5. Reduced incentives for new development

Especially in rent-stabilized cities:

- Developers may shift investment to suburbs or other cities without controls.
- Financing becomes harder because future rental income is less predictable.
- This can **slow housing expansion where it is most needed**.

---

6. Administrative complexity and legal disputes

Rent stabilization systems often require:

- Regulatory agencies
- Compliance tracking
- Legal definitions of "allowable increases," "covered units," etc.

This can lead to:

- Litigation between landlords and tenants
- High administrative costs for cities

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7. Benefits are unevenly distributed

A frequent critique is distributional fairness:

- Long-term tenants benefit most, regardless of income.
- New renters (often younger or lower-income newcomers) are excluded.
- This can create a system where **benefits depend on timing rather than need**.

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8. Evidence from economists (general consensus caveat)

Many studies in urban economics (though not all) find:

- Rent control helps existing tenants in the short term
- But can reduce affordability overall in the long term by constraining supply

Cities like San Francisco and New York are often cited in these discussions.

Renters cannot be defined as overpaying based on comparison to averages for rents in less desirable locations. If the market is prevented from setting rents based on supply and demand, experience in other locations demonstrates that the supply of rental properties will decrease, leading to a long-term increase in rental costs. Only reduction in demand or increase in supply will achieve the outcome of lower rents.

Simon Knight

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Dear Mayor and City Council Members,

I respectfully urge you not to adopt the proposed rent freeze, rent stabilization program, expanded eviction restrictions, and additional Ellis Act limitations currently under consideration.

While I appreciate the City's desire to address housing affordability and tenant stability, I believe these measures are likely to create unintended consequences that will ultimately reduce the availability of rental housing in Santa Barbara.

The proposed ordinances significantly increase government regulation of private housing, limit property owners' flexibility, create new administrative burdens, and establish a complex system of boards, petitions, fees, hearings, and enforcement procedures. These additional costs and restrictions will discourage investment in rental housing, reduce incentives to maintain and improve older properties, and may encourage owners to leave the rental market altogether.

Housing affordability is a serious concern, but the fundamental problem is a shortage of housing supply. Policies that make it more difficult, costly, and risky to own and operate rental housing do not address that shortage and may worsen it over time.

Santa Barbara should focus on policies that encourage the creation of new housing, streamline permitting, reduce development barriers, and support both tenants and housing providers. A healthy rental market requires cooperation between landlords and tenants, not increasing layers of regulation that can create conflict and uncertainty for both.

I respectfully ask the City Council to reject these proposed ordinances and instead pursue solutions that increase housing supply, encourage investment, and preserve a healthy and sustainable rental housing market for future generations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Myers
Santa Barbara City (5th generation) Resident

Rent caps aka “stabilization,” results in disaster. Doing so decreases the owners ability to maintain and improve buildings, creating blight and is a detriment to the area as a whole. New investors and developers who seek to add housing will cease to consider Santa Barbara a viable place to do business. This adversely cuts down title and transfer taxes, property taxes, all planning and building taxes and employees salaries and revenue etc…for the city.

Additionally, most rental units are small older “mom and pop” properties that barely keep seniors above the poverty lines themselves.

Penalizing them with an “envy” tax, which at best is an extreme act of social welfare and not social justice cuts into one group over another more fragile group who historically can’t keep up with inflation themselves. Social security doesn’t cut it. Moreover, whole other industries like property management, plumbers/electricians/painter etc…lose work as owners refuse to pay and do work themselves or simply ignore issues in their buildings.

Take a look at Venice, Santa Monica, and other high rent control areas and compare them to Beverly Hills. On the one hand there is rampant deterioration and blight.

On the other hand there is in Bevely Hills a well maintained city with clean streets, an active police force, public services like free preschool and senior centers both of which are vibrantly programed with activities, after school and summer programs, free gyms/tennis courts…

A city and it’s citizens do better when social engineering is at a minimum and revenue is at a maximum when it comes to housing.

NO RENT CONTROL.

Thank you,

L. Johanna Israel

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

I owned a small house on the east side and when I got married, I decided to rent it out rather than sell. I am a very reasonable landlord who even allows dogs. IF this local government starts telling me what I have to cap rent at, I will sell and renters will have one less rental. I know many others who will do the same!

By the way, the rent receive is below market so I will need to increase vastly if you pass this so I don't get stuck charging below market forever!

P{LEASE look what has happened to neighborhoods in LA or NY where this has been implemented. DISASTER!

We live in a resort community. Build low cost housing for workers but do not cap rental homes.

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

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A city and it’s citizens do better when social engineering is at a minimum and revenue is at a maximum when it comes to housing.

NO RENT CONTROL.

Thank you,

L. Johanna Israel

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
Anyone with a basic level of understanding of economics knows that rent control decreases housing supply, decreases housing quality, decreases housing turnover and increases overall housing costs. Please read any basic economic textbook because it's obvious you haven't already. Suggested textbooks include Basic Economics by Tomas Sowell, Free to Choose by Milton Friedman and Economics in One Lesson by Henry Hazlet. Or take some online economics education at George Mason University https://mru.org/courses/principles-economics-microeconomics/rent-controls-economics

On another note, it is my understanding that Santa Barbara City Council members who are renters failed to recuse themselves from voting on this issue. That is unconscionable.

Josh Feuer

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
To the Santa Barbara City Council,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed Residential Rent Stabilization Ordinance.

While I understand the concerns surrounding housing affordability, I believe this ordinance moves Santa Barbara in the wrong direction by inserting government regulation into private housing markets where supply and demand should be allowed to function naturally.

California's housing crisis is fundamentally a supply problem. The solution is not additional regulation of existing housing providers, but rather policies that encourage the creation of more housing. When property owners and landlords feel confident that they can make reasonable investments and earn reasonable returns, they are more likely to build accessory dwelling units (ADUs), convert underutilized space into housing, and invest in rental properties. As housing supply increases, competition naturally places downward pressure on rents.

This ordinance risks achieving the opposite result. By imposing additional regulations and restrictions on rental housing, the City may discourage homeowners from creating new rental units and discourage future investment in housing. Every homeowner who decides not to build an ADU because of concerns about future regulation represents one less housing unit available to local residents.

I recognize that the draft ordinance currently exempts newer units. However, that exemption provides little comfort. The City is effectively signaling that it is willing to regulate rental housing and limit property rights when political circumstances change. Homeowners and investors must make decisions based on long-term expectations, not temporary exemptions that could be amended or removed by a future council. The uncertainty created by this ordinance will inevitably discourage investment in new housing.

My perspective comes from personal experience. I grew up in Santa Barbara and attended local schools. My wife and I have worked hard for many years to purchase our home in this community. We have also invested significant time, effort, and financial resources into building an ADU on our property. We took on that investment because we believed we were helping address the local housing shortage while creating long-term value for our family.

Policies like this diminish that opportunity. They limit the potential of homeowners who are willing to invest in housing solutions and take on the financial risks associated with building and maintaining rental units. Rather than encouraging more housing, they create uncertainty and reduce incentives for property owners to participate in solving the housing shortage.

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

Santa Barbara should focus on policies that increase housing production, streamline permitting, reduce development costs, and encourage homeowners to add rental units. Expanding supply is the most sustainable and effective way to address housing affordability. Restricting rents may sound appealing in the short term, but it does not create new housing and can ultimately make the housing shortage worse.

I respectfully urge the City Council to reject this ordinance and instead pursue policies that encourage housing creation, protect property rights, and allow market forces to help address the housing challenges facing our community.

Sincerely,

Kas Seefeld

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026

You will never provide enough housing for everyone who wants to live here. Santa Barbara is a gorgeous place, and demand will always exceed supply. The only way to keep rents in check is to start by putting a cap on property costs. Deed-restricted housing is the only viable first step. Without that baseline, rent stabilization will create tenements.

I believe the City of Santa Barbara should stay out of the business of trying to control rent costs. Many cities have attempted to do this and many negative outcomes have surfaced.

Why would small owner landlords want to continue to rent their properties with a city oversight group trying to manage how they do business and make a small profit?

It would place a disproportionate strain on these mom and pop landlords. With rising property taxes and huge increases in homeowner insurance landlords will not maintain their properties. They will be forced to kick out the tenants and sell the property or move into the property themselves.

It will lead to declining living conditions for many of these units. Because landlords can't increase rent enough to cover maintenance costs they will let units rot and they will detract from the beauty of this city we call home.

Go figure out how to incentivize developers to offer more affordable housing and back away from the idea of rent control in Santa Barbara.

Santa Barbara is a beautiful city and people all over the world would love to live here. It is therefore not affordable for everyone who wants to call this home. That's the reality.

Regards,

C Hornberger

I think you need to listen to the expects like Peter Ruppert who has studied this concept of controlling a privately owned small business instead of address the real issue.

Small businesses like owning a rental property is hard enough these days with skyrocketing costs of improvements, insurance and utilities. If you want to make it so that the rents stay "Stable" subsidies to the owners should be on the table, not just the tenants.

The City should be encouraging safe housing and limiting the income will mean owners will not have the financial ability to improve the property, which in turn reduces local contractor's ability to do the work and tenants live in properties that are not updated.

STAY out of it and allow smart building to happen!

Adrienne Schuele

While I understand and support the idea of creating more economically viable housing options for local residents, I think that the cost to implement this new legislation will be more than anticipated and counter productive. Given the current budget shortfall issues, this should be considered- is this going to be cost effective for the city to administer? Is the cost estimate to administer it realistic? In addition, there is at least as much research to indicate rent stabilization does not work as there is to support it. Existing renters may benefit, but research seems to indicate it also leads to a reduction in housing stock. I'd rather see more work force sand low income housing developed by the city, by the county, schools, and joint public -private partnerships.

Hap Freund

General Public Comment on Draft Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Just Cause Ellis Act Amendments Ordinance
Public Comment Period – June 10, 2026 to July 10, 2026
See below:

The Economist consistently argues that while rent stabilization provides short-term relief for incumbent tenants, it causes severe market-wide failures. The magazine's archives highlight four primary unintended consequences that ultimately exacerbate long-term housing crises. [1, 2, 3]

1. Housing Supply Contraction

By capping returns on investment, rent stabilization discourages developers from building new residential units and prompts current owners to convert existing rentals into higher-end, non-regulated condominiums. This drastically shrinks the overall pool of available rental housing, forcing un-stabilized market rents to skyrocket. [1, 2, 3]

2. The "Lock-In" Effect

Rent-controlled tenants are highly incentivized to remain in place. This limits renter mobility, which can distort labor markets and make it exceptionally difficult for new entrants or growing families to find housing that matches their needs. [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]

3. Reduced Maintenance and Quality

With returns capped, landlords frequently have diminished financial incentive—and lack the capital—to invest in routine maintenance and structural repairs. Over time, this can lead to the physical degradation of the housing stock. [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]

4. Perverse Distribution of Wealth

Economic archives note that rent control frequently fails its intended progressive goals. Benefits often disproportionately go to wealthier, long-term tenants, while lower-income households and new arrivals are locked out of the system. [1, 2, 3]

Notable editorials and reports from *The Economist* detailing these failures include:

- **"Rent control will make housing shortages worse"** (Sept 19, 2019): A leader piece covering how over-regulation and rent caps act as a detriment to successful housing markets globally. [1, 2]
- **"American cities want rent control to rein in housing costs"** (Aug 25, 2022): Summarizes studies by economists on the unintended consequences of rent-cap policies. [1]

- **"After a year, Berlin's experiment with rent control is a failure"** (Mar 9, 2021): Details how Berlin's rent cap scheme (the *Mietendeckel*) decimated the number of classified rental ads and worsened the local housing shortage. [1]

Respectfully,

Robert Permut