

Bogus Referendum Attempt on Temporary Rent Stabilization Ordinance

By Thursday Roberts, Fair Rents for Pacifica

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Pacific City Council voted to put rent stabilization on the ballot in November. It also passed a temporary moratorium on rent increases above 3.4 percent and no-cause evictions to last until the election. Without the temporary moratorium, landlords will be able to increase rents egregiously and evict tenants.

The city attorney was very cautious in her advice, and the moratorium begins May 24. Spartment complexes and individuals all over town are getting huge rent increases in this narrow window of time. Many of them will be displaced because they can't afford the new, much higher rents. We have at least one eviction as well.

The petitioners are telling people to sign the petition so the people can vote on rent stabilization. That is already a done deal due to City Council's action. What the petition would do if they get the needed signatures (around 2,200) is to put the temporary moratorium on the ballot in November, and it would not be in effect between now and November. Landlords would have the right to increase rents to any level they chose between now and November, leaving many community members displaced and unable to vote.

City Council has an urgency ordinance on the agenda Monday night, May 9. If there are four votes for that, then that vote would trump the petition and the moratorium would be in place.