

CIVIL EMERGENCY ORDER

CITY OF SEATTLE

MORATORIUM ON SMALL BUSINESS TENANT EVICTIONS

WHEREAS, in my capacity as Mayor, I proclaimed a civil emergency exists in the City of Seattle in the Mayoral Proclamation of Civil Emergency dated March 3, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the civil emergency necessitates the utilization of emergency powers granted to the Mayor pursuant to: the Charter of the City of Seattle, Article V, Section 2; Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Chapter 10.02; and chapter 38.52 RCW; and

WHEREAS, the facts stated in that proclamation continue to exist, as well as the following additional facts:

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared that COVID-19 disease is a global pandemic, which is particularly severe in high risk populations such as people with underlying medical conditions and the elderly, and the WHO has raised the health emergency to the highest level requiring dramatic interventions to disrupt the spread of this disease; and

WHEREAS, as of March 17, 2020, Public Health – Seattle & King County announced a total of 518 cases of COVID-19 in King County residents, including 46 deaths; and

WHEREAS, on March 16, 2020, the Governor of Washington state and the Local Health Officer for Public Health – Seattle & King County issued parallel orders temporarily shutting down restaurants, bars, and other entertainment and food establishments, as well as prohibiting public gatherings of 50 or more people; and

WHEREAS, national public health experts believe the lack of testing has masked the true spread of COVID-19 virus, and that our region has potentially over 2,000 cases, which could double every six days; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared a national emergency to allow the government to marshal additional resources to combat the virus; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, the Governor of Washington state and the Local Health Officer for Public Health – Seattle & King County issued parallel orders prohibiting gatherings of 250 people or more for social, spiritual and recreational activities in King County; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 crisis has had a significant impact on the local economy impacting the retail, restaurant and other industries resulting in economic hardship for small business owners due to loss of business income, layoffs and reduced work hours for a significant percentage of this workforce; and

WHEREAS, the City expanded the small business stabilization fund of \$1.5 million to help at least 150 small businesses, but within the first week over 2,760 small businesses have applied demonstrating the significant need to help small businesses during this unprecedented public health epidemic; and

WHEREAS, jurisdictions across the nation are considering or have implemented eviction prevention measures to provide small business stabilization support during this unprecedented public health emergency; and

WHEREAS, Art. XI, Sec. 11 of the Washington State Constitution grants cities like The City of Seattle broad police powers to “make and enforce within its limits all such local police, sanitary and other regulations as are not in conflict with general laws”; and

WHEREAS, a temporary moratorium on small business tenant evictions during the COVID-19 outbreak will protect the public health, safety, and welfare by providing small businesses with stable locations from which to operate during and after the public health emergency, thus reducing the number of small businesses declaring bankruptcy and closing during the economic downturn caused by the public health emergency; and

WHEREAS, the Charter of the City of Seattle, Article V, Section 2, gives the Mayor authority to protect public peace and order in the city under a declared civil emergency. Further, SMC 10.02.020.A.15 authorizes the Mayor to proclaim “such other orders as are imminently necessary for the protection of life and property” and take extraordinary measures to protect the public peace, safety and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 civil emergency requires the issuance of an order that is specifically aimed at a moratorium on small business tenant evictions during the civil emergency in order to keep small businesses from economic collapse and protect the public safety, health and welfare as set forth in this Civil Emergency Order; and

WHEREAS, the conditions of this Civil Emergency Order are designed to provide the least necessary restriction on the rights of the public per SMC 10.02.025.C; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to SMC 10.02.025.B, I believe it is in the best interest of the public safety, rescue and recovery efforts, and the protection of property that the exercise of certain rights be temporarily limited as set forth in this Civil Emergency Order; therefore,

BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THAT:

I, **JENNY A. DURKAN**, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, ACTING UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF SEATTLE MUNICIPAL CODE SECTIONS 10.02.020, AND 10.02.025, AND MY MAYORAL PROCLAMATION OF CIVIL EMERGENCY, DATED MARCH 3, 2020, HEREBY ORDER:

SECTION 1:

A. Effective immediately, a moratorium on small business and nonprofit tenant evictions for non-payment of rent or due to the expiration of the lease's term are hereby ordered until the earlier of the termination of the civil emergency declared in the Proclamation of Civil Emergency dated March 3, 2020 or 60 days from the effective date of this Emergency Order. The decision to extend the moratorium shall be evaluated and determined by the Mayor based on public health necessity;

B. For purposes of this moratorium, "small business" shall have the same meaning as in RCW 19.85.020(3): "'Small business' means any business entity, including a sole proprietorship, corporation, partnership, or other legal entity, that is owned and operated independently from all other businesses, and that has fifty or fewer employees" per establishment or premises;

C. For purposes of this moratorium, a "nonprofit" shall mean an entity that: (1) is a "not for profit corporation" or "nonprofit corporation" under RCW 24.03.005(16) or is designated a "public benefit not for profit corporation" or "public benefit nonprofit corporation" under RCW 24.03.490; (2) holds tax-exempt status under 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3);

D. During this moratorium, an owner of property shall not enforce a contract or statutory remedy under a lease that would remove a small business or nonprofit tenant from its premises. These prohibited remedies include, but are not limited to, terminating the tenant's lease or terminating the tenant's right to possession of the premises;

E. During this moratorium, an owner of property also shall endeavor to enter into a payment plan, or other workout agreement to assist a distressed small business or nonprofit in rent relief, including but not limited to the deferred payment of rent, discount to rent, or other strategies to address the economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 civil emergency. Further, no small business or nonprofit tenant shall incur late fees, interest, or other charges due to late payment of rent during the moratorium; and

F. For any pending eviction action for the non-payment of rent, it shall be a defense to any eviction action that the eviction of the small business tenant would occur during the moratorium. Given the public health emergency and public safety issues, a court may grant a continuance for a future hearing date in order for the eviction action to be heard after the end of the moratorium.

SECTION 2:

All mayoral proclamations and orders presently in effect shall remain in full force and effect except that, insofar as any provision of any such prior proclamation is inconsistent with any provision of this proclamation, then the provision of this proclamation shall control.

SECTION 3:

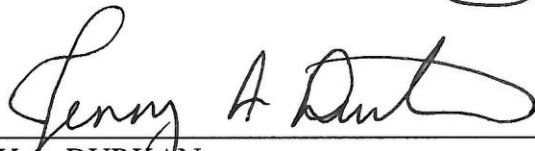
A copy of this Civil Emergency Order shall be delivered to the Governor of the State of Washington and to the County Executive of King County. To the extent practicable, a copy of this

Civil Emergency Order shall be made available to all news media within the City and to the general public. In order to give the widest dissemination of this Civil Emergency Order to the public, as many other available means as may be practical shall be used, including but not limited to posting on public facilities and public address systems. SMC 10.02.100.

SECTION 4:

This Civil Emergency Order shall immediately, or as soon as practical, be filed with the City Clerk for presentation to the City Council for ratification and confirmation, modification or rejection, and if rejected this Civil Emergency Order shall be void; however, any such rejection or modification shall not affect any actions previously taken. The City Council may, by resolution, ratify, modify or reject the order. If the City Council modifies or rejects this Civil Emergency Order, said modification or rejection shall be prospective only, and shall not affect any actions taken prior to the modification or rejection of this Civil Emergency Order, including the City's responsibility for the actual costs incurred by those who were ordered by or entered into contracts with the City, as set forth in Seattle Municipal Code subsection 10.02.020.B. The Council shall endeavor to act on any order within 48 hours of its being presented to the Council by the Mayor.

DATED this 17th day of March, 2020, at 4:30 and pm.



JENNY A. DURKAN
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE