

Item 6.a.(4)

**Rent Stabilization Board
Elected Commissioners**

January 10, 2017

Honorable Mayor Libby Schaff
Mayor's Office
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Honorable Mayor Schaff:

Greetings from the Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board.

Berkeley's artist and creative communities have shared the loss of friends and artists and allies from the Ghost Ship tragedy last month.

We are very alarmed at the sudden increase in evictions of creative spaces across the Bay Area. Many warehouse spaces are up to fire code (or very close to it), yet landlords are getting cold feet and suddenly evicting long-time residents in live/work units, sometimes with the help of city inspectors. This compounds the horrible tragedy of December 2, 2016, by pushing the friends, lovers, and fans of the 36 dead out of our community.

The Berkeley City Council and Berkeley Rent Board have stepped up to identify how we can ensure safety, affordability, and permanence for our city's creative live/work spaces.

We've identified existing protections under our Rent Control, Good Cause for Eviction (Oakland's version is called "Just Cause for Eviction"), and Relocation Ordinances.

An ad hoc committee of the Mayor, the City Council, and the Rent Board are exploring further protections, using the 2010 update of the NYC Loft Law as inspiration.

We intend to ensure that any safety improvements that a live/work/performance space needs are not a de facto eviction notice for that space or its residents. A right of first refusal for residents to return to their rental units is key to ensure that the Bay Area continues to be a creative beacon in the United States in 2017.

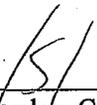
We urge you to work with your city's staff, legal framework, and creative communities to push forward similar protections for Oakland.

We welcome any coordination or joint meetings that you or your city's staff would like to convene.

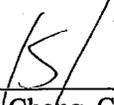
Yours,



John Selawsky, Chair



Jesse Townley, Commissioner



James Chang, Commissioner