

*Joseph A Raso*

[REDACTED] CHULA VISTA, CA 91910

Telephone [REDACTED]

Honorable Mayor & City Council

March 17, 2025

I am here tonight to express my deep frustration with this Council's inaction and mismanagement. After two years of speaking before you, presenting no-cost solutions, and exposing the harm your decisions have caused to Chula Vista residents, I GIVE UP. In 70 years of my family operating La Bella Pizza Garden, I have never seen a City Council so ineffective.

Here are just a few glaring examples:

- 1. Tenant Protection Ordinance:** The current wording is forcing hundreds into homelessness and driving rents sky-high. The attached nine-page report details the devastation this policy is causing. Also a no cost solution is provided.
- 2. Downtown Sidewalk Dining Debacle:** You bulldozed outdoor dining areas in August 2024, promising a new ordinance by November. Not only has no ordinance been introduced, but staff hasn't even held a single meeting. Five downtown venues have already gone under due to this failure, while we continue losing business to San Diego's Little Italy.
- 3. Residential Cell Tower Disaster:** Despite unanimous community opposition and an alternative commercial site, you approved a cell tower in a residential neighborhood at 2nd Ave & G Street.
- 4. \$10 Million for 36 Motel Rooms:** Spending \$277,000 per room at the Palomar Inn for homeless housing is outrageous. How can you justify this?

**5. Downtown Landscaping Fiasco:** Forcing struggling businesses to pay \$50,000 annually for a water-hungry city staff designed landscape plan is irresponsible. Native landscaping existed here long before the city's costly and wasteful scheme.

**6. No Pedestrian Traffic Plan:** The best way to create a vibrant downtown is to bring more people to live there. A simple, effective step: refund permit fees for small (10–15 unit) developments, subsidized by higher fees for larger projects.

Enough excuses. Hiding behind legal technicalities is a cop-out. The City Attorney's job is not to inform what you can't do. His job is tell you how to do what our community wants you to do. It's time to act before more damage is done.

Respectfully,

*Joseph A. Raso*

*Joseph A Raso*

[REDACTED] CHULA VISTA, CA 91910

Telephone [REDACTED]

Honorable Mayor & City Council,

January 14, 2025

I come before you again with a heartfelt plea on behalf of the homeless and financially vulnerable in our community, who continue to suffer as a result of the poorly written provisions of the Tenant Protection Ordinance (TPO).

Over two years ago, when a draft of this ordinance was first reviewed, many were shocked. Former Council Member Jill Gavez voted against the measure realizing such an ordinance would result in massive rent increases. The clauses imposing severe penalties on uninformed landlords were clearly going to result in preemptive rent hikes, disproportionately impacting the poorest among us. Recognizing this danger, My wife and I acted swiftly to be advocates for change.

**First:** We gathered City Staff data quantifying the harm the TPO has caused to our most vulnerable residents. See Attachment One.

**Second:** Details of specific clauses in the TPO that are most harmful, resulting in families being pushed out of their homes and onto the streets, are included in Attachment Two.

**Third:** As a 15 year CAST volunteer I have witnessed firsthand the human toll of bad city policies. I have been dispatched by the CVPD in the middle of the night to assist homeless families. I will never forget the empty stare in the eyes of a little girl who was forced by **YOU** to sleep in a cardboard box. I am sure there are additional innocent victims of this ordinance's unintended consequences. See Attachment Three.

**Fourth:** We have employed a multi-faceted strategy to address the crisis, as outlined in Attachment Four.

**Fifth:** A zero cost compassionate solution exists—one that aligns the TPO with state mandates without placing undue burdens on renters or taxpayers. This detailed solution is outlined in Attachment Five.

Despite this clear evidence of ongoing suffering, the Council has not taken effective corrective action. The TPO has created immense hardship for low-income renters and has increased homelessness, yet no meaningful steps have been taken to alleviate this burden.

I was informed by city staff member Stacie Kurtz that, with competent legal representation, my wife and I can prove we are exempt from provisions of the TPO. This demonstrates our intentions are honorable and are driven by a commitment to fairness, not self-interest. I have lived on the same quiet Chula Vista cul-de-sac for 66 years. My wife Mary and I deeply care about our community. We will take every necessary step to stop council's obsessive policy of pushing people out of their homes and onto the streets.

We implore you to act now. We are not requesting new programs or initiatives. We are simply asking you to stop perpetuating harm. A zero cost minor change to the wording of the TPO, as suggested in Attachment Five, could make an immediate difference in easing this crisis and restoring dignity to the least fortunate of our community.

We plead for at least one Council Member to step forward, show compassion, place this matter on Council's agenda and rally your fellow Council Members to address this urgent issue. The continued resilient spirit of our community is at stake. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

*Joseph A. Raso*



**Attachment One:**

***City Staff Supplied Data and Supporting Conclusions:***

- 1) Chula Vista Population: 283,972 (Chula Vista - U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts 2022)*
- 2) Average number of individuals in each household: **3.31**. (Chula Vista - U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts)*
- 3) Percentage Chula Vista housing which are rentals. **42%** (Data compiled by City Staff )*
- 4) Number of Chula Vista Rental Units: **36,033**  
(Population of Chula Vista (283,972) divided by the average number of people residing in each Residence (3.31) equals 85,792 multiplied the percentage of residences which are rentals (42%) equals the approximate number of Chula Vista rental units. (36,033)*
- 5) Approximate number of Chula Vista renters: **119,268** (CV Population 283,972 x .42% = 119,268)*
- 6) Approximate Average Monthly Chula Vista Rent: **\$3,047.00** (See attached CV Staff provided “Relocation Assistance” Pic - Average of Line 2nd from bottom)*
- 7) With no right to cure, amount of daily fine threatening Landlords or Tenants who inadvertently makes a paperwork error when Tenant terminates lease and moves: **\$5,000.00** (Clauses 9.65.060 E and 9.65.080 C2 of the “Tenant Protection Ordinance”)*
- 8) Maximum average monthly rent increase allowed annually: **\$304.70** ( $\$3047.00 \times 10\%$ . California AB-1482 5% plus inflation Max 10%)*
- 9) Average number of months required for Landlord to impound a 1 day fine: **16.41** ( $\$5000.00$  divided by  $\$304.70$ )*

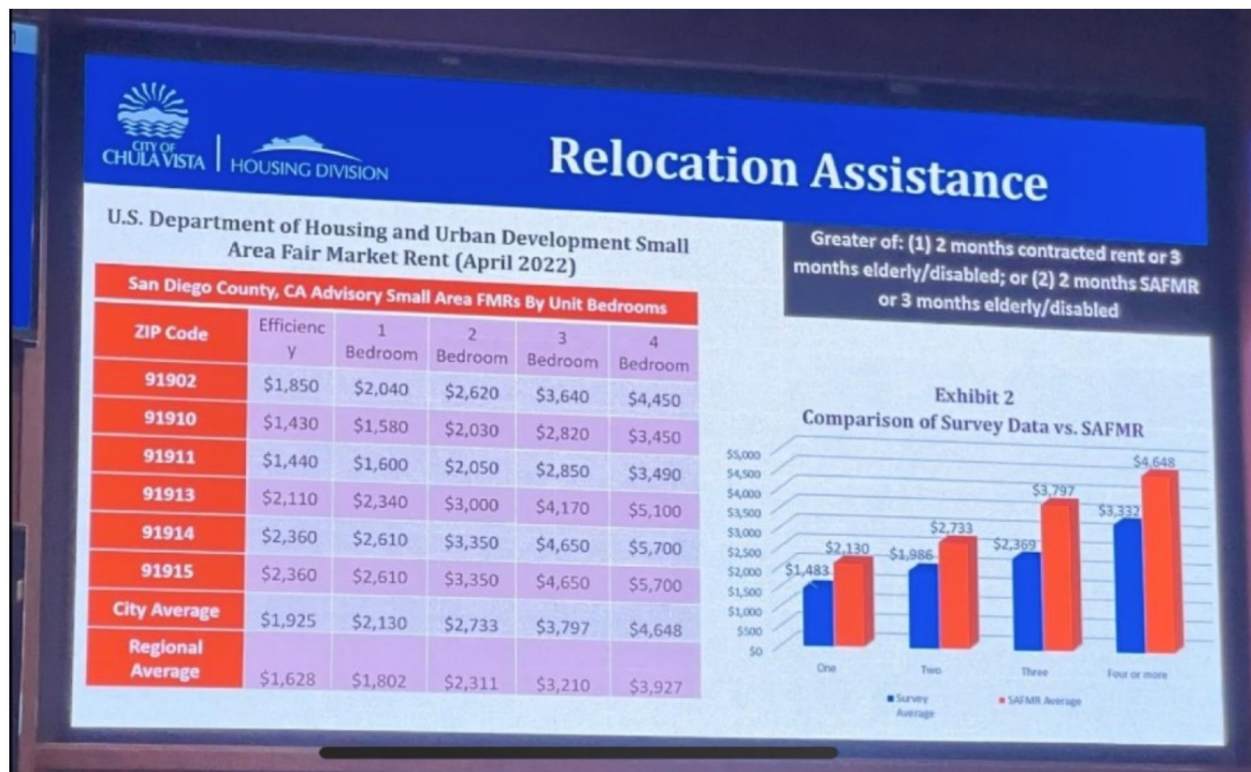
## Supporting Conclusions Drawn From Staff Supplied Data:

### A simple analysis of the data reveals:

1) **\$10,979,255.00:** The approximate total monthly maximum rent increase levied on Chula Vista Renters if Landlords are forced to impound funds to the pay daily fines: *(36,033 Rental Units multiplied by the 10% max allowed rent adjustment \$304.70 = \$10,979,255.00 )*

2) **596 New Homeless:** Approximate number of Homeless created if only one half of one percent of Chula Vista renters are forced out of their homes by the rent increases caused by the Tenant Protection Ordinance: (CV Population 283,972 x 42% = 119,268 x .5% = 596)

### City Staff Supplied Chart:



## **Attachment Two: (Clauses of Concern)**

*Clause 9.65.060E: Reporting Requirements. Owners and Tenants shall provide the City with information regarding termination of tenancies at such times and with such details as required by the City in the attendant Administrative Regulations.*

When a tenant decides to vacate a property by simply moving away without giving written notice, it is left to the Landlord to terminate the lease. Simple logic dictates that the Landlord's termination must fall into an "At Fault Just Cause Termination" or a "No-Fault Just Cause Termination" category. A Tenant simply moving away does not fall into the "Notice Not Required" category as listed in item one below. Such a situation results in the Landlord being required to supply City Staff with information as listed in 2B below.

### *070 Administrative Regulations Requirements Upon Termination of Tenancy A. Owner Notice to City Regarding Termination*

#### *1. Notice Not Required*

*Owners are not required to notify City of At-Fault Just Cause terminations.*

*Intent to occupy by Owner or Family Member.*

*Compliance with Government or Court Order.*

*Withdrawal from the rental market.*

*Substantial remodel or Complete Demolition*

#### *2. Notice Required*

*In accordance with 9.65.070(B), Owners of Residential Rental Unit(s) are required to notify City of No-Fault Just Cause terminations*

#### *B. Content of Notice*

*A CVMC 9.65.070(B) notice by Owner to City of a No-Fault Just Cause termination must contain the following information:*

- Property Address;*
- Owner name, phone and email;*
- Number of total units within complex;*
- Number of units vacant at time of noticing;*

*Number of termination notices issued;  
Contracted rent at time of notice, for all terminated tenancies; and  
Copy of all termination notices.*

**If any errors are committed by Landlord when submitting data to City Staff, Landlord is subject to fine in Clause 9.65.080C2 listed below.**

*Clause 9.65.080C2: Civil penalties for violations of this chapter may be assessed at a rate not to exceed \$5,000,00 per violation per day.*



### **Attachment Three:**

#### **CAST Volunteer Experience:**

For the past fifteen years, I have volunteered with CAST (Civilian Adversity Support Team). CAST is a team of approximately sixty trained volunteers on call 24 hours a day and dispatched by the Chula Vista Police Department to assist community members who have suffered a sudden death in the family. Calls may range from violent murders to the peaceful passing of an elderly relative.

One evening I was dispatched by the CVPD to the Palomar Trolley Station. Expecting a tragic accident I was relieved to find no one had died. Instead, the police officer on the scene pointed me to a homeless man sleeping in a refrigerator box with his six-year-old daughter. The policeman asked if I could help improve their situation. I arranged for them to be taken to a shelter for single fathers. The image of that family's struggles became embedded in my heart, fueling my commitment to assist the financially vulnerable in our community. If you had seen the empty stare on that little girl's face, you would share my deep commitment to helping the underserved and immediately amend the "Tenant Protection Ordinance."

#### **TPO's Effect on Chula Vista Elementary School Children:**

The present wording of the Tenant Protection Ordinance continues to exasperate the homeless situation of the youngest and most vulnerable members of our community.

As chairman Downtown Chula Vista Association's Land Use Committee, we were approached by representatives of the Chula Vista Elementary School District at our December 2024 meeting. At that meeting, School District representatives pleaded with business leaders for assistance in improving the lives of the ever increasing number of homeless children in our schools. The latest data revealed by the Chula Vista Elementary School District has reported 224 1st thru 6th grade children enrolled in our elementary schools are homeless (as defined as either living on the street, in a car, in a tent, or residing in a night to night motel stay).

#### **Attachment Four:**

**Multi-pronged approach to bring relief to the poorest in our community.**

#### **Community Efforts:**

**Feeding the Homeless:** Our church organized a team of volunteers to feed the increasing number of homeless resulting from the passing of the “Tenant Protection Ordinance.” Once a week, church members prepare meals for Chula Vista’s homeless. Realizing this was insufficient to mitigate the severe financial devastation as a result the “TPO”, We initiated additional efforts.

**Raising Awareness:** We endeavor to make the City Council aware of the damage caused by the current wording of the “TPO”. Naively believing that awareness coupled with effective solutions would prompt immediate corrective action, we have gathered data from City staff documenting the pain and suffering inflicted by the “TPO”.

## **Attachment Five:**

### **Zero Cost Proposed Solution:**

**1. Notification System:** Before issuing a \$5,000 daily fine, notify the offending party of non-compliance. This can be accomplished by removing the word “**Not**” from clause 9.65.080C2 “*When a violation occurs, it is **not** required that a warning or notice to cure must first be given before an administrative citation or civil penalty may be issued.*” Obviously honest “Mom & Pop” landlords would gladly come into compliance, while the few “bad apples” would be easily identified by their attempts to circumvent the law.

**2. Chasing a Nonexistent Problem:** Surprisingly, since the implementation of the Tenant Protection Ordinance, NOT ONE unscrupulous landlord has been fined because NOT ONE unscrupulous landlord has been found. However, this fact does little to slow the ever rising rents. Just as prudent landlords must secure fire insurance as a precaution against catastrophe, they must also preemptively raise rents to guard against the possibility of future \$5,000.00 daily fines. Such relentless rent increases results in an ever increasing homeless population.

**3. Benefits:** The removing the word “Not” from clause 9.65.080C2 of the TPO:

- a) Complies with state of California requirements,
- b) Relieves landlords need to preemptively raise rents,
- c) Protects low income tenants from unnecessary financial strain,
- d) Assists homeless to secure more affordable housing.