



Rent Stabilization Board

June 8, 2020

Office of the Secretary and
Chief of Staff to the Regents
1111 Franklin St., 2nd Fl.
Oakland, CA 94607

Re: Purchase of 1921 Walnut St., Berkeley, California/ Preservation of Affordable Housing

To Whom it May Concern:

On April 20, 2020 Michelle De Guzman, Director Real Estate Acquisitions and Development for the University sent the attached letter to tenants at 1921 Walnut St., an eight unit rent-controlled apartment building located in Berkeley, California. The letter detailed that the property was to be purchased by the Regents and that the University was to undertake its redevelopment and ultimately displace its tenants. While the letter was not an eviction notice per se, it made clear that a private company would be in contact with the tenants to begin the process of their relocation and ultimate eviction.

Please be aware that the City of Berkeley has had rent control since 1980 and that a core value of the City, as expressed numerous times by its voters, is the preservation of affordable housing and the protection of its tenants. It is a mission and value that this elected Rent Board considers to be of tantamount importance.

Upon receiving this notice from the University, several tenants have reached out to numerous government officials such as City Councilmembers and local Rent Board Commissioners, seeking information and guidance as well as expressing anxiety over what may be their displacement from their homes. Please note that several of the tenants at the Walnut Street property have been living there for at least ten years.

At our most recent May 21st meeting, the Rent Board voted to send this letter to the Regents expressing our support of the preservation of this property and the local rent-control status of its tenants or, in the alternative, that should the property be removed from the protections of the local rent control ordinance, either via sale, demolition or other means, that the Regents commit to replacing these eight units on a one-to-one basis with comparable affordable units. In addition,

should the tenants at Walnut St. be displaced from their homes we urge that they be relocated into units of comparable size and rents.

Finally, while the Regents are generally exempt from local land use regulations and some statewide legislation, we urge that the Regents honor all applicable local and state laws that pertain to the tenancy rights of these citizens.

Sincerely,



Honorable Members Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board

Cc: Nancy Skinner, State Senator SD9
Buffy Wicks, AD 15
Jesse Arreguin, Mayor, City of Berkeley
Councilmembers, City of Berkeley
Kamala Harris, US Senator
Dianne Feinstein, US Senator
Gavin Newsom, Governor
Michelle De Guzman, Director, Real Estate Acquisitions & Development
Tenants @ 1921 Walnut St.