



CITY OF OAKLAND
newsrelease
Office of the City Attorney

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City of Oakland Sues Oakland Housing Authority

Lack of on-site management contributes to problems

(Oakland, CA) Today, Oakland City Attorney John Russo, Oakland City Council President, Ignacio De la Fuente and Councilmembers Desley Brooks and Pat Kernighan announced the filing of a lawsuit against the Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) for failing to maintain their properties. OHA is one the largest landlords in Oakland with over 3300 apartments.

The lawsuit contends that OHA's failure to maintain and repair properties adversely affects the City of Oakland. In particular, of the apartment units under the control of OHA, 1615 apartment units are at 254 "scattered sites" that do not have on-site managers. The continuous and unabated criminal activity (including but not limited to drug sales, drug possession and prostitution), housing code violations, unsafe living spaces, accumulation of garbage, dirt, debris, rodents and insects is a blight on the City of Oakland and the residences surrounding the OHA properties.

"After several years of communication with the Oakland Housing Authority regarding these problems and after several community meetings where neighbors described the atrocious conditions surrounding some of the OHA sites, significant improvements have not been made to improve the scattered sites throughout the City," said Council President Ignacio De la Fuente. "Neighbors deserve better and we are determined to help our residents achieve a decent quality of life in all of our city's neighborhoods."

"Through this lawsuit it is our hope to ensure that the management and staff of the Oakland Housing Authority understand that everyone, regardless of income or station in life, deserves safe, sanitary and habitable housing," said Councilmember Desley Brooks.

"OHA has failed to manage its properties responsibly, allowing nuisance activity to go unabated for years, " said Councilmember Pat Kernighan. "When landlords neglect their properties, not only do the existing tenants suffer but the whole community gets pulled down."

(continued)

City Councilmembers exhausted all options to work with OHA to get properties fixed and have found that litigation is the only means left to solve the chronic issues. The lawsuit has two causes of action: maintenance of a public nuisance and injunctive relief for the court to compel OHA to repair and maintain their properties in a safe and habitable condition.

“Oakland doesn’t like having to file this suit,” said Oakland City Attorney John Russo, “but we can’t shrink from our responsibilities to our people. We hope to resolve this issue with the Oakland Housing Authority quickly. It’s in our collective interest to work together for the public good.”

The OHA lawsuit is attached as a pdf.

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