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Burlington, VT 05408

Burlington City Council
149 Church Street
Burlington, VT 05401

Dear Council Members:

I understand that the Council is considering eliminating the “no cause, non-renewal” clause from leases in the City of Burlington charter. This change would severely effect renters. Renters who depend on safe, well maintained and affordable housing would be severely impacted by eliminating the clause.

I have been renting a unit at Little Eagle Bay for over 28 years. My landlord has always maintained a well-managed, safe environment. On two occasions the landlord had to use the above-mentioned clause to maintain that environment. On one occasion my next-door neighbors were manufacturing methamphetamine. Not only was the smell terrible, but there was always the threat of fire. (I filed a report with the police, but they did nothing.) The second time the neighbor was smoking marijuana in the house, although the lease clearly states “no smoking” in the unit. This went on for six months, giving me headaches, sinus trouble, etc. If Little Eagle Bay had renewed the lease with this neighbor, I would have been forced to vacate the unit for health reasons. As you can see in certain situations maintaining the clause in the lease was vital to my residency and my health.

As you know renting in the city is now very expensive and rents continue to rise. If faced with not being able to regulate the safety of the rental units, landlords will not be serving those of us who enjoy living in the city. We need certain guarantees of a safe and healthy environment - an environment that we can maintain without being forced to seek legal advice. Many might be forced to look for housing outside the city in the surrounding area just to feel comfortable in their homes without added expense. It would be a great loss to Burlington and its residents.

Thank you for your consideration with this matter.

Sincerely,

Emilie Mattesich