



California Apartment Association
Los Angeles County

March 12, 2026

Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
VIA EMAIL

Item 22: Oppose– Continued Declaration of Penal Code 396

Dear Supervisors,

On behalf of the California Apartment Association (CAA), we urge you to end the declaration of Penal Code 396. The declaration has massive ramifications beyond the fire impact zone.

While the emergency provisions of Penal Code 396 served as an important safeguard for residents during a challenging period, the circumstances that justified its extension no longer exist. For several months, CAA has respectfully requested that the County begin the process of phasing out the emergency provisions and establish a clear timeline for its conclusion. This emergency declaration was intended to be temporary. Instead, it has become routine for emergency housing regulations to become indefinite. The continuation lacks clear reasoning, guardrails, or objective benchmarks for termination.

Recovery has progressed and market conditions have materially improved. **Vacancy rates in the County are above 5 percent**, indicating increased housing availability. **A recent Los Angeles Times article titled “[Finally a Renter’s Market](#)” highlights a softening rental market.** These conditions are the opposite of those that originally supported extensions of Penal Code 396.

Continuing the emergency declaration under these circumstances is counterproductive. The ongoing application of Penal Code 396 has wide-ranging implications that deter housing availability and discourage the reintroduction of critically needed homes currently being withheld from the market. Allowing Penal Code 396 emergency provisions to end would support a return to normal market operations, encourage the reintroduction of needed homes currently being withheld from the market, and provide necessary flexibility for housing providers while maintaining compliance with standard state and local housing laws.

Ending this emergency order is the responsible course of action.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Fred Sutton
California Apartment Association