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Denver City Council approves rental license

Tonight, Denver City Council passed the “Healthy Residential Rentals for All” legislation that requires all rental properties to obtain a license and inspection to ensure rental units are complying with Denver’s minimum housing standards. The new legislation is to prevent housing conditions that adversely affect the life, safety and general well-being of tenants.

“My office, along with community stakeholders, have been working for the past two years to address tenants’ rights and protections in the city of Denver,” said bill sponsor Council President Stacie Gilmore. “Often, the most vulnerable tenants do not complain about their living situations for a number of reasons including fear of retaliation, living without a lease or not knowing they have a right to a safe and livable housing.” Gilmore added, “I am proud of this policy, it is fair and thoroughly researched, and we are finally taking the burden off our tenants to ensure compliance and providing a more equitable, prevention-based approach to quality housing.”

The residential rental license requirement is phased and will start Jan. 1, 2022 with an opt-in early licensing, multi-family rental dwellings starting Jan. 1, 2023 and single-family rental dwelling units starting Jan. 1, 2024. Licenses will require a fee and third-party inspection process.

The ordinance also adds additional renter protections starting Jan. 1, 2022 that include:

- Renters have written leases for all new tenancies exceeding 30 days
- Rental owners and operators provide notice of tenant’s rights and resources, and provide them again if any rent demand is posted. The information will include how to make a complaint related to minimum housing standards, a statement regarding tenants’ legal rights when receiving a notice to vacate their premises, and how to locate rental assistance and legal service providers.

“Denver has been in a housing crisis for decades and the pandemic has put even more uncertainties on our residents,” Gilmore said, adding, “This policy will help stabilize housing and neighborhoods by gathering basic property owner information as well as important rental data, enabling us to broadly share resources with tenants, and strengthen landlord-tenant education and outreach.”

The legislation was co-sponsored by Councilwoman Pro Tem Jamie Torres and Councilwoman Robin Kniech.

For more information on the policy, please visit: www.denvergov.org/longtermrental.

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