

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORT

2024 Legislative Session

Reference No.:	CB-008-2024
Draft No.:	1
Committee:	COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Date:	3/12/2024
Action:	FAVORABLE

REPORT:

Committee Vote: Favorable, 10-0 (In favor: Council Members Harrison, Blegay, Burroughs, Dernoga, Fisher, Franklin, Hawkins, Olson, Oriadha and Watson)

The County Council convened as the Committee of the Whole to consider CB-008-2024 on March 12, 2024. The Chief Legislative Attorney summarized the purpose of the bill.

CB-008-2024 is an emergency bill for the purpose of extending the sunset date of the Temporary Rent Stabilization Act of 2023 for a period of six (6) months from April 17, 2024, to October 17, 2024, to continue combating the existing public emergency affecting the public health, safety, and welfare; said emergency being the threat of homelessness due to a lack of affordable housing.

The Temporary Rent Stabilization Act of 2023 was enacted via CB-007-2023 as response to the public emergency of homelessness caused by a lack of affordable housing. The Act limits landlords' ability to increase rent for certain tenants above a certain amount; provides for certain exemptions; provides that existing obligations or contract rights may not be impaired by this Act; and other generally relating matters to rent restrictions for residential leases and rental dwelling units.

Mr. Dwayne Mingo, Director of Government Affairs with the Prince George's County Association of Realtors spoke in opposition to CB-8-2024. The Prince George's County Association of Realtors continues to oppose rent stabilization on residential and commercial properties as the policies are misguided and could result in unintended consequences. He explained that continuing CB-008-2024 will not assist with rent stabilization and needs to consider the rising property insurance, maintenance, and renovation costs. Mr. Mingo also explained that if the County Council desires to extend the Rent Stabilization Act, he recommends increasing the rent cap, considering including the Consumer Price Index, and exempting small housing providers from the bill.

Ms. Scott, a member of CASA, part of the Prince George's Housing Justice Coalition, and a renter in Council District 9, fully supported CB-008-2024. She explained that the County made huge progress in protecting renters last year. Many renters are very grateful for the three percent cap legislation that was enacted.

The County promised to work on a permanent solution to the rent hike. Ms. Scott requested the support of the County Council to pass the six-month extension to give a little more time for a permanent solution.

Ms. Eden Aaron, Research and Policy Analyst with CASA representing Prince George's County, supported CB-8-2024. She explained that CASA has a mission to empower the working class and immigrant communities and represents over fifty thousand lifetime members in over four states, with thousands living in Prince George's County. Ms. Aaron explained that the temporary rental stabilization in Montgomery County lapsed before the permanent legislation was enacted, which caused numerous landlords to raise rents.

Mr. Ryan Washington, with the Apartment and Office Building Association (AOBA), requested that the bill be amended to include the Consumer Price Index instead of a flat three percent. The following amendment was to ask the Council to extend the bill for three months instead of six months.

Ms. Sakinda Skinner, County Council Liaison, stated that the County Executive's Office supported CB-008-2024. She explained that the Department of Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement (DPIE) will continue to do the best it can with limited capacity and resources to stop bad actors from violating tenants' rights under the Rent Stabilization Act. They recognize that most landlords are doing the right thing.

Council Member Oriadha, the bill sponsor, explained that County Council legislation may be passed before the six-month end date.

After discussion, on a motion by Council Member Blegay, seconded by Council Member Oriadha, the Committee of the Whole voted favorably on CB-008-2024.