



NEWS

Frustrated Huntington Beach mobile home owners continue to seek answers



Donna Andrade joins others in a Mobile Home Resident Coalition rally at Yorktown and Main Street prior to Tuesday night's Huntington Beach City Council meeting. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

BY MATT SZABO | STAFF WRITER

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Members of the Mobile Home Resident Coalition rallied outside of Huntington Beach City Hall on Tuesday afternoon, continuing to fight steep rent hikes that have put many of them in a perilous position, leading them to ask the City Council for assistance.

The MHRC has been putting its resources into [backing Assembly Bill 1035](#). Introduced by state Assemblyman Al Muratsuchi (D-Torrance), the bill would prohibit the management of a mobile home park from increasing the gross rental rate for a tenancy for a space more than 3% plus the percentage change in the cost of living — or 5%, whichever is lower — over the course of a 12-month period.

That bill has been put on hold, however, by Buffy Wicks, the chair of the Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee. There is a lawsuit by Anaheim Mobile Estates challenging a new state law that imposes rent restrictions on mobile home parks located within at least two cities, and that litigation could impact Muratsuchi's bill.

AB 1035 has become a two-year bill, meaning it would have to move through committees next year and go into effect in January 2025 at the earliest.



Members of the Mobile Home Resident Coalition rally on Tuesday. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

“When we thought there was a possibility of 1035, we switched our energies to that,” said Teri Williams, chief operating officer of the Mobile Home Resident Coalition, which recently expanded its outreach and includes homeowners in Fountain Valley, Torrance, the South Bay and Long Beach. “Now that’s further along down the road, so we are considering trying to get [a mobile home rent stabilization ordinance carve-out] on the ballot again [for 2024]. But you can see that the city’s sure not going to help us.”

The City Council was actually set to vote on formally opposing AB 1035 at Tuesday night’s meeting, as recommended by the Intergovernmental Relations Committee. Since the bill itself has been delayed, however, Councilman Dan Kalmick made the motion, seconded by Mayor Tony Strickland, to delay voting on that. The delay was unanimously approved.

Later in the meeting, city housing manager Charles Kovac outlined the city's continuing [mobile home Tenant Based Rental Assistance program](#). The program, designed to help eligible seniors who are designated extremely low or very low-income, received more than 130 applicants, Kovac said.

It uses [HOME funds](#) from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, with \$546,000 budgeted for this year.



Members of the Mobile Home Resident Coalition rally at Yorktown and Main Street in Huntington Beach on Tuesday. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

Kovac said about 11 mobile home residents will initially receive rent assistance, beginning with May rent, but there are 20 to 30 more in the pipeline.

“There’s been a lot of comments from the residents that the city’s not doing anything to support the mobile home park community, when in fact we are,” Councilman Casey McKeon said. “The city is providing resources, and it’s increased going forward last year going into this year.”

But Williams said it’s simply not enough.

“They did bring out the program, and we think it was in response to us asking for assistance,” she said. “I guess officially they can say that they did that for us, but we’re not happy with helping 30 mobile homes out of 2,500.”

In fact, the council has not heeded advice from the Mobile Home Advisory Board at least twice in the last two years. Last April, the [board voted 5-4](#) to send a proposed rental stabilization ordinance “carve-out” of Section 803 of the city charter to the City Council for review, but members did not act on that.



Teri Williams joins others in a Mobile Home Resident Coalition rally at Yorktown and Main Street on Tuesday night. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

More recently, it [denied a request by the board](#) for a mobile home outreach and a market research study, with McKeon saying he didn't feel it was proper to use taxpayer money on a survey to promote rent control.

"We really don't understand why they won't help us," Williams said. "I mean, the advisory board is a joke. I love some of the people that are on it, but everything they recommend to the city, the city won't do. So why do we even have it?"

Several members of the Mobile Home Resident Coalition spoke during public comments. Jeanne Farrens, who lives in the Skandia Mobile Country Club, read off substantial amounts of contributions that several council members received from mobile home park owner interests in 2021 and 2022.

During the rally, mobile home owners chanted, “Higher rents, more tents,” and, “What do we want? Rent caps. When do we want them? Now.”

Art Estrada, 75, moved into Skandia in 2021, just before the park’s sale to Investment Property Group closed.



Jeanne Farrens of the Mobile Home Resident Coalition rallies at Yorktown and Main Street on Tuesday. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

The space rent for Skandia new home buyers [was increased \\$750 a month](#), and current tenants saw their space rents raised \$75 a month each year for the next three years.

“I’m glad [my rent] didn’t go up quite \$750,” Estrada said. “That would have been kind of a hard nut to crack.”

He paused just briefly.

“But eventually, it will be there.”



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