



SB 488 (Hueso) – Enforcement of Pest Infestation Fact Sheet

Pest Infestations Harm Health

Housing conditions have a significant impact on health. Infestations of insects and rodents are particularly harmful to residents. Cockroach and rodent allergens in homes have been linked to an increase in the prevalence and severity of asthma symptoms, with cockroach allergens estimated to be the primary contributor to childhood asthma in inner-city homes nationwide.ⁱ The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identifies 35 diseases spread by rodents through bites, contact with feces, urine, or saliva, or through intermediary insects like fleas.ⁱⁱ Bed bugs are identified as having significant physical and mental health impacts, including itching, hives/welts, infections, anxiety, and insomnia.ⁱⁱⁱ

Current Law Related to Pest Infestations

Substandard housing conditions are defined as conditions that threaten the “life, limb, health, property, or welfare of the public or the occupants.” Infestations of insects, vermin, or rodents are defined as a substandard housing condition. Additionally, a lack of or inadequate garbage storage and removal is defined as substandard because these conditions can contribute to a pest infestation by providing food and harborage for pests.^{iv}

The Problem

The authority to enforce the pest infestation provisions is currently limited to a Health Officer. However, not all jurisdictions in California have access a Health Officer. As a result, these communities lack the ability to enforce state law, leaving tenants with pest infestations and unresponsive landlords vulnerable to persistent substandard housing conditions.

The Solution

SB 488 will allow local code enforcement officers to determine when there are pest and vermin infestations and cite for inadequate garbage storage and removal if the locality does not have an agreement with a Health Officer.^v Local code enforcement officers already conduct housing inspections and enforce all but the pest infestation and garbage sections of the state housing code; therefore, there are no costs associated with SB 488.

SB 488 gives tenants across California with the means to safeguard safe and habitable housing by giving authority to local code enforcement officers to equally enforce laws across the state. This will provide local communities the necessary tools to maintain quality housing, protect property values, and address blight.



Additionally, SB 488 will not require additional training to enforce pest infestations. Local jurisdictions that use this expanded authority will determine if additional training of their enforcement officers is needed and the California Association of Code Enforcement Officers will offer trainings on pest infestations for officers seeking continuing education on the topic.

Support

California Association of Code Enforcement Officers (Sponsor)
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network (Sponsor)
Regional Asthma Management and Prevention (Sponsor)
California Narcotic Officers Association
California Police Chiefs Association
California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation
California State Parent Teachers Association
Coalition for Economic Survival
Community Action to Fight Asthma

Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries
Healthy Building Science
Healthy Homes Collaborative
Inquilinos Unidos
Long Beach Alliance for Children with Asthma
Pacoima Beautiful
Public Health Institute
San Diego Regional Asthma Coalition
San Francisco Asthma Task Force
Western Center on Law and Poverty
YMC Childcare Resources Services

ⁱ Eggleston, P. A., A. Butz, C. Rand, J. Curtin-Brosnan, S. Kanchanaraksa, L. Swartz, P. Breyse, et al. "Home environmental intervention in inner-city asthma: a randomized controlled clinical trial." *Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology* 95 (6): 518–524 (2005).

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ⁱⁱ US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/rodents/> (Accessed March 1, 2013).

ⁱⁱⁱ Joint statement on bed bug control in the United States, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/Publications/Bed_Bugs_CDC-EPA_Statement.htm#1 (accessed 3/1/13).

^{iv} Health and Safety Code Section 17920.3 defines substandard housing conditions, including pest infestations (a)(12) and inadequate garbage storage and removal (a)(15). <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=hsc&group=17001-18000&file=17920-17928>

^v Code Enforcement Officer as defined in Penal Code 829.5. <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=pen&group=00001-01000&file=829.5>