



March 15, 2020

To the Board of Supervisors, Mayors, and City Council-members of Marin County:

The Marin Organizing Committee (MOC) is a broad-based organization made up of 22 dues-paying institutions, including faith-based, nonprofit, and civic organizations in Marin. We write to ask for your support in protecting vulnerable members of our community during this time of state and national emergency.

MOC is deeply concerned about members of our community who are unable to work during this crisis, either because their workplaces have been closed or because they must stay home to care for loved ones, including children whose schools have been closed. We have heard from our member institutions that families living paycheck-to-paycheck are worried that they will be evicted in April if they are unable to pay their rent. Legal Aid of Marin has already received one case of a tenant facing eviction due to lost work because of COVID-19, and they expect to see many more at the beginning of April when most rent checks are due.

Many cities in California, including San Jose, San Francisco, and Oakland are moving forward with plans to implement a temporary eviction moratorium in order to protect renters. These moratoriums do not absolve tenants of their responsibility to pay rent, but allow them to remain housed until they are able to resume work and regain financial stability.

Multiple state Legislators have called upon Governor Newsom to implement a statewide moratorium on all pending and new eviction actions, foreclosures, and utility shut-offs, and we are hopeful that he will do so. However, if the state fails to act by April 1, MOC is calling on Marin's Board of Supervisors and our local city and town councils to enact a local moratorium on evictions and utility shut-offs. To do otherwise risks allowing Marin residents to fall into homelessness — due to the effects of a virus far beyond their control. We cannot allow this public health crisis to worsen.

In addition, MOC is concerned about the effect of COVID-19 on people experiencing homelessness in Marin, as it is recognized that this population is particularly vulnerable to the virus. Health department advisories to stay home and wash hands frequently are meaningless to people who do not have access to private shelter, plumbing or healthcare. Now that community transmission has been confirmed in the county, MOC is calling for immediate action to protect our community, including exploring all options to provide immediate shelter for people such as utilizing motel rooms and vacant buildings, and providing restrooms and sanitation stations, located in easily accessible areas.

We understand that much is still unknown about how COVID-19 will ultimately affect Marin County, but it is clear that the poorest and most vulnerable in our communities are at the greatest risk. It is our shared duty to protect them. We urge you to act now.

Respectfully,

Rabbi Susan Leider  
Congregation Kol Shofar

Pastor Thomas Gable  
Marin Lutheran Church

Stephanie Haffner  
Executive Director, Legal Aid of Marin

*On behalf of the 22 member institutions of the Marin Organizing Committee*