



Legislation Text

File #: 2021-0331, **Version:** 1

A MOTION requesting the executive to report on delays in distributing rental assistance moneys and to recommend options for expediting the distribution of rental assistance moneys.

WHEREAS, on January 21, 2020, the Washington state Department of Health confirmed the first case of the novel coronavirus ("COVID-19") in the United States in Snohomish County. COVID-19, a respiratory disease that can result in serious illness or death, is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which is a new strain of coronavirus that had not been previously identified in humans and can easily spread from person to person, and

WHEREAS, on February 29, 2020, the Washington state governor proclaimed that a State of Emergency exists in all counties in the state of Washington as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and

WHEREAS, the King County executive issued a proclamation of emergency on March 1, 2020, in order to allow King County to quickly respond to the new or different demands on service in response to the emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and

WHEREAS, in March 2020, the state and the county instituted "stay-at-home" orders to prevent the spread of COVID-19 that closed all businesses except defined essential businesses, resulting in significant unemployment, and

WHEREAS, on March 18, 2020, Governor Inslee issued a proclamation prohibiting eviction actions based on nonpayment of rent until April 17, 2020, and subsequent proclamations extending protections for tenants through September 30, 2021, and

WHEREAS, renters are still obligated to pay landlords, and mortgage-holders are still obligated to pay lenders, resulting in potentially significant accumulated debt for those who defer payments, and

WHEREAS, federal moneys have been provided to support tenants and landlords through rental assistance, and

WHEREAS, over one hundred thousand renters in Washington reported that they are "not at all confident" they can pay their rent, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey, and

WHEREAS, the Seattle Times reported in August 2021 that King County had spent only six million five hundred thousand dollars of the one hundred forty-five million dollars provided by the federal government for rental assistance, and

WHEREAS, King County has delivered rental assistance to approximately nine hundred tenants as of August 2021, a small portion of the approximately ten thousand nine hundred renters and landlords who have applied for assistance;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The executive is requested to report to the council on delays in distributing rental assistance moneys, including identifying existing barriers, and to recommend options for expediting the distribution of rental assistance moneys, including any additional resources needed and an estimated timeframe for distributing all rental assistance moneys.

B. The executive should electronically file the report by November 1, 2021, with the clerk of the council, who shall retain an electronic copy and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers.