

EAST COUNTY HOUSING OPPORTUNITY COALITION URGES THE LEGISLATURE TO MAKE CHANGES IN LAW FOR RENTERS – FIRE REVEALS GAPS IN RENTAL LAWS

Lafayette, CO November 29, 2022 — The East County Housing Opportunity Coalition

(ECHO) released a report detailing the results of interviews and conversations with renters after the fire, as well as the report from the attorney that ECHO worked with to provide legal services after the fire. Both reports will be available on the ECHO website tomorrow. The reports revealed major shortcomings in the law designed to protect renters. According to ECHO reforms are needed regarding 1.) habitability and remediation, 2.) retaliation against tenants who seek remediation, and 3.) disaster-related price gouging.

ECHO encourages legislators to make reforms in the laws designed to protect renters, and makes some specific suggestions for how to change the law to protect renters after a disaster. For example, the current law requires property owners to pay for suitable shelter for tenants while a unit is being made habitable. But the law does not require landlords to tell tenants this, and they do not have to provide housing, if the tenants do not ask for it. Most tenants do not have attorneys, nor even a copy of their lease if the fire destroyed it. Thus, many tenants were paying for a hotel room out of their own pocket while property owners were remediating, as well as paying rent on their unit. ECHO recommends that the law be changed so that property owners be required to inform tenants of their right to a habitable unit. Local legislators and legislative leadership will also be sent a link to these reports.

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