

# OC mobile home residents, who looked to legislature for rent relief, will have to wait



Kim DeSante and her son Rory protest with the Huntington Beach Mobile Home Resident Coalition before a City Council meeting in Huntington Beach, CA on Tuesday, June 7, 2022. Legislation in Sacramento meant to enact certain renter protections, including rent control, has stalled in the statehouse because of ongoing litigation regarding a different law. (Photo by Paul Bersebach, Orange County Register/SCNG)

By [Kaitlyn Schallhorn](#) | [kschallhorn@scng.com](mailto:kschallhorn@scng.com) | Orange County Register

PUBLISHED: April 25, 2023 at 7:00 a.m. | UPDATED: April 25, 2023 at 8:59 a.m.

Mobile home renters who were watching legislation in [Sacramento](#) meant to enact some [rent control](#) will have to continue waiting before they see relief — at least coming from the statehouse.

From Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi, D-Torrance, is [legislation that would cap mobile home space rents](#) from increasing more than 3% plus the percentage of change in cost of living, or 5% annually, whichever is lower. It would not preempt any local ordinance that may offer even stronger protections for renters, Muratsuchi said.

The idea behind the bill is to protect lower-income and seniors on fixed incomes from losing their mobile homes as rents across the state skyrocket, said Muratsuchi.

But the legislation hit a roadblock last week when a committee decided not to hear the bill — in other words, pause its movement in the legislature — because of pending litigation.



Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi introduced legislation this year meant to enact renter protections, including capping space rents, for mobile home residents. (Photo by Brittany Murray, Press-Telegram/SCNG)

Assemblymember Buffy Wicks' office pointed to [Anaheim Mobile Estates' lawsuit challenging a new state law](#) that imposed rent restrictions on mobile home parks located within at least two cities — a lawsuit that could impact Muratsuchi's bill when it's all said and done.

“As a general practice, most committees will not hear bills that are involved in active litigation,” said Erin Ivie, a spokesperson for Wicks, the chair of the Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee.

“In this particular case, holding AB 1035 and making it a two-year bill will allow sufficient time for the lawsuit to conclude, providing certainty about what is legal and not legal in this space and preserving our committee's ability to weigh in on amendments to the bill,” Ivie said.

Muratsuchi says he's open to amending the bill to address any issues raised by the lawsuit but had wanted it to continue to move forward this year.

“The bigger picture is that homelessness is clearly a statewide crisis — and mobile homes are one of the last remaining affordable housing options in the state with many seniors choosing to live in mobile homes, either out of choice or by necessity,” Muratsuchi said. “We know that seniors are tragically the fastest-growing segment of the homeless population, (and) we need to do everything we can to protect seniors living on fixed incomes.”

The bill had the attention of the Huntington Beach Mobile Home Resident Coalition, which has been [regularly imploring the city for rent relief](#).

“Hope is on the horizon,” read a message from the coalition earlier this year about the bill. “This is a promising step toward safety and financial security for manufactured Homeowners. Its success depends on us and our efforts.”

Since the bill has been tabled, the coalition has encouraged its members to reach out to Wicks' office to say: “We can't hold out (until) 2024.”

Aside from the Huntington Beach group, Muratsuchi's bill also had support from the Golden State Manufactured-Home Owners League and the California Democratic Party Renters Council, among others.

Meanwhile, in Huntington Beach, councilmembers earlier this month opted against a mobile home market space rent study. Those who opposed it said the survey could be used to "promote" rent control.

But Councilmember Dan Kalmick said such a study hadn't been conducted in about 20 years and gathering that information could be used for other purposes other than rent control.

"I think folks moving into a mobile home park want to have an understanding of what rent is around the city, and if they are being treated unfairly, they can advocate for themselves," said Kalmick.

In a split vote, the council decided against the Mobile Home Advisory Board's request for a market study and funding for informational marketing and outreach to the mobile home community.