



News from:

City Attorney Barbara J. Parker

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### COURT APPOINTS RECEIVER TO ENSURE EMPYREAN HOTEL TENANTS' RIGHTS TO SAFE AND DECENT HOUSING ARE PROTECTED

Oakland, CA — On Friday, June 26th, the Alameda County Superior Court granted Oakland City Attorney Barbara Parker's motion to appoint a receiver to take charge of the Empyrean Hotel in downtown Oakland and oversee repairs and other measures to ensure tenants' rights to safe and decent housing.

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The City Attorney's Neighborhood Law Corps unit sued the owners of the residential hotel for maintaining the property in an uninhabitable condition and for conduct that violates Oakland's newly adopted Tenant Protection Ordinance and state laws protecting tenants' rights.

"We will not tolerate landlords who maintain their properties in such deplorable conditions and exploit and violate tenants' rights," said City Attorney Parker. "I want to acknowledge the work of Neighborhood Law Corps attorney Melosa Granda for her skillful work on the motion, and the City's Building Services Department for its work in inspecting the property and citing the landlord for violations; and, we honor the tenants of the Empyrean, who remained vigilant and supportive throughout the process and the Eviction Defense Center which assisted the tenants."

The Empyrean, located at 13th St. and Webster St., is home to approximately 100 to 150 residents. Residents complained for months of deplorable conditions. There was also significant media coverage about the appalling conditions at the hotel.

The City temporarily evacuated the residential hotel recently due to contaminated water supply, and has cited the owners for numerous housing-code violations, including electrical, heating and major plumbing problems. The elevator in the four-story building also was inoperable for several months.

"All of Oakland's tenants have a legal and moral right to healthy, habitable housing," said City Councilmember Abel Guillen, who represents the district where the hotel is located. "Bad actors must be held accountable for exposing rent-paying residents to deplorable conditions and a form of blight that affects the entire neighborhood."

"Thank you to City Attorney Parker and her team for sticking up for tenants who have had to endure ridiculously unconscionable living conditions." said City Councilmember Dan Kalb, author of Oakland's Tenant Protection Ordinance (TPO), which the City Council passed last year. "Glad to see that the TPO has real teeth when it comes to going after landlords who act irresponsibly."

The receiver will have control of the property to address the living conditions and work with the City and other parties to bring the property into compliance with health, safety, building and other habitability standards. As required by law, the court will hold a hearing on July 7 to confirm the receivership.

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