

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

For consideration at the Standing Committee meeting of City Council on April 16, 2025

3. **Advocating for Pet-friendly Rental Housing**

Submitted by: Councillor Fry (on behalf of the Renters Advisory Committee)

WHEREAS

1. Research indicates that companion animals improve cardiovascular health, physical mobility, and mental well-being. The companionship of a pet can reduce feelings of loneliness and can be a catalyst for improved relationships with neighbours. These benefits are especially significant for seniors, unhoused people looking to transition into permanent housing, and those with mental health challenges;
2. Rental housing is already scarce in the City of Vancouver, housing insecurity is exacerbated by the limited availability of pet-friendly rental units. This scarcity often results in higher rents for pet-friendly units, forcing many tenants to make the choice to rent a unit they cannot truly afford or compromise on other aspects related to housing. When a tenancy ends, restrictions on pet-friendly options often result in renters being forced to surrender their pets to avoid homelessness - this burden disproportionately affects lower-income households;
3. Current tenant support policies and protections, such as the Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy (TRPP), offer only limited protections for renters with pets. The TRPP states that tenants who had previously had a pet under a pet-accommodating tenancy will be offered a pet-friendly unit as part of the Right of First Refusal. However, these same protections do not cover the interim alternate accommodations - and an applicant is only required to demonstrate "reasonable effort" in meeting a tenant's identified priorities, with pet-friendly housing being listed as just one of several examples; and
4. Vancouver and British Columbia are lagging: No-pet clauses in Ontario are specifically banned and protection is in place for individuals with companion animals through the Ontario Residential Tenancies Act. Legislation has passed in the U.S. and France recognizing the choice to have a companion animal as a basic civil right. In 2020, Vancouver City Council unanimously voted to end no-pet clauses; however, this will not result in any meaningful change or progress for residents without further action. Significant work was also done by the prior Renters Advisory Committee, which resulted in a successful motion put forward by Councillors Fry and Swanson on behalf of the committee.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Vancouver City Council advocate to the Province of British Columbia, with the following motion to UBCM, to Amend the Residential Tenancy Act to eliminate no-pet clauses and better protect renters with pets:

WHEREAS a majority of British Columbian households include at least one dog or cat, and that companionship imparts various wellbeing benefits to mental and physical health;

AND WHEREAS housing insecurity is exacerbated by the limited availability of pet-friendly rental units often resulting in higher rents, and restrictions on pet-friendly housing often result in renters being forced to surrender their pets to avoid homelessness, a burden that disproportionately affects lower-income households;

AND WHEREAS British Columbia is lagging other jurisdictions: No-pet clauses in Ontario are specifically banned, and protection is in place for individuals with companion animals through the Ontario Residential Tenancies Act. Legislation has passed in the U.S. and France recognizing the choice to have a companion animal as a basic civil right.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT UBCM ask the Province of British Columbia to amend the Residential Tenancy Act to prohibit blanket “no pets” clauses in rental contracts, instead providing for appropriate management guidelines, including requirements, tenant responsibilities, and conditions for landlord indemnification in rental contracts for tenants with pets.

- B. THAT Vancouver City Council expand pet-friendly tenant protections within policies, including but not limited to the Broadway Plan, the Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy (TRPP), and as part of the scheduled 2026 review of the Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy. These policies should ensure that tenants displaced by redevelopment are guaranteed access to pet-friendly housing both in the interim, and upon return to the redeveloped unit.
- C. THAT Vancouver City Council encourage an increased percentage of new purpose-built rental buildings to be pet-friendly. This measure will help alleviate pressures such as scarcity, insecurity, and unaffordability, and appropriate language should be integrated into the Housing Strategy Review and other housing documents and plans going forward.