



for: Greater Boston Real Estate Board, One Center Plaza, Boston, MA 02108

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Watch Boston's Rents Rise and We All Pay Twice

The City of Boston is about to pass a law ordinance that will result in rents rising across the City of Boston, hitting those least able to afford them the hardest. The City's initiative, which has taken the form of a proposed ordinance, is intended to spur investment in energy efficiency upgrades by shaming owners of energy inefficient buildings into making improvements in their properties. They want to give buildings a SCARLET LETTER. Their goal makes good sense, however the City's plan does not. This plan will ultimately affect tenants, both commercial and residential who already pay for energy saving measures on their utility bills.

If passed, the City's ordinance will require property owners to collect utility information from every household or commercial tenant, complete complex energy audits, and then report and disclose the results -- which will then be evaluated or "scored" by government regulators. Owners who refuse to comply will face enforcement or fines. Costs forced upon building owners by the City will ultimately be paid by their tenants in the form of increased rent.

As energy users we currently pay fees tucked away in our utility bills to fund conservation measures. Why should we have the City forcing ratepayers to pay for those same services again? The Boston Globe and the Herald have editorialized against this ordinance. Further, Dr. Robert Stavins of Harvard University analyzed this Boston City Ordinance, and determined that it is not clear if this proposed ordinance will even work.

The Greater Boston Real Estate Board supports policies or programs aimed at conserving energy or protecting our environment; but those policies must not, stigmatize property. It should not result in duplicative costs passed on to tenants. We need environmental education and programs that work. We are concerned not only with the impact on the business community, but on housing affordability. Boston should be proud of the work the City has done to voluntarily encourage energy conservation measures, but tenants should not be saddled with a new



unfunded mandate with questionable environmental benefit. To put that burden on Bostonians, when to date, no city has shown energy scoring to be effective, is ill advised.

To prevent a rent increase that may occur as a result of this proposed ordinance, please contact your city councilor before the vote on May 8th. You can find your city councilor here. <http://www.cityofboston.gov/citycouncil/councillors/>

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