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## Displacements continue

Council poised to extend eviction notice requirement for renters



### After the Camp Fire, Chris Singleton

and his two roommates invited a family who'd lost their home in Paradise to live with them for several months. That family found a home in Magalia in the spring and soon may be returning the favor.

Now, Singleton is losing his home in southwest Chico, too: His landlords want to sell. He's been there for more than three years and has to be out by July 31.

"I thought I had something lined up for a few weeks up until the start of July, but that fell through. Now I'm on the scramble," he told the CN&R. "I do have some friends in Magalia that stayed with me after the Camp Fire, and they offered me their couch, if nothing else, but that's a long drive [to work]."

Singleton says he doesn't blame his landlords. They lost their home in the fire, and have since moved to another state. However, he's yet to have luck finding any alternatives—when rentals aren't immediately snatched up, they're just too expensive.

This second wave of displaced residents post-Camp Fire prompted the Chico City Council to provide some temporary relief until the market stabilizes. On July 2, the panel voted unanimously to consider an

emergency ordinance at its next regular meeting, on Aug. 6 (the delay will give the City Attorney's Office time to research and craft it). If adopted, it would immediately require landlords to give renters 120 days' notice. As of now, the state mandates 30 to 60 days, depending on the length of tenancy. It'd be in effect for six months, with the potential for renewal.

This wasn't the first time the issue was brought up. In February, Councilwoman Ann Schwab wanted to explore relief for displaced renters, including the notice extension, as well as financial stipends and an "eviction for good cause" ordinance, which would make it tougher for landlords to kick out well-behaved tenants. Her colleagues balked—her motion died for lack of a second.

Five months later, the issue resurfaced at Vice Mayor Alex Brown's request. She told the CN&R that, back in February, the council received hundreds of emails from professionals in the housing industry after the agenda was posted, assuring the panel that the crisis was ebbing and would end soon.

"I think, in good faith, the council decided to hold off and see if that were true," she said.

Chris Singleton has to be out of his current rental by July 31. Like many other renters, he is struggling to find another place to live in Chico.  
PHOTO BY ASHIAH SCHARAGA

Since then, the panel has continued to hear from those who were displaced and unable to find anything but long wait lists.

That's why Brown brought the topic back. "Admittedly, we should have done something months ago," she said.

**This instability in the rental market** has been happening since November, whether landlords have decided to sell their properties to capitalize on an inflated market or because they lost their own housing in the fire (see "Squeezed out," Newslines, Dec. 13).

At the council's July 2 meeting, the panel considered Schwab's original proposal. In general, an eviction for good cause ordinance requires landlords to prove there is a "good cause" to terminate a lease, such as a tenant failing to pay rent or damaging property, or the landlord needing to make substantial repairs or move into the property. Some require landlords to provide tenants with financial assistance to relocate.

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