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Statement by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
On a Rent Increase Moratorium in Unincorporated Los Angeles County

“The issue of tenant protections is not a policy area where we have consensus amongst the field of scholars studying it. Yet we know that it’s an issue that tugs at the hearts of many – particularly individuals and families who are experiencing housing instability.

“The context of unaffordability across Los Angeles County is unprecedented. And in the face of this housing affordability crisis, which has direct connections to our homeless crisis, intervention is warranted.

“While rent control is often described as a blunt or inelegant tool during times of crisis, it is warranted to prevent displacement and to protect tenants. Unlike Prop 10, the rent increase moratorium considered by the Board today was designed to be temporary. It is our job to create a safety net when needed, and now is one of those times.

“But even with the passage of a rent increase moratorium, our work is not done. We need much better data to understand the level of rental rate increases happening across the County – specifically in the unincorporated areas where the Board has direct jurisdiction – and also the rates of eviction within these areas.

“We also need a better system to proactively monitor tenant-occupied units and ensure that complaints related to uninhabitable conditions are properly addressed. We should

give serious consideration to a mandatory conflict resolution or mediation program for landlord/tenant disputes and to consider – as New York City has done, and as the City of LA is doing – mechanisms to provide “Right to Counsel” for those low-income tenants who are being threatened with eviction proceedings and would benefit from legal counsel.

“This is a work in progress, but I am committed to making progress to further housing affordability in our region.”

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