



ALAMEDA COUNTY HEALTH CARE SERVICES AGENCY  
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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One Frank Ogawa Plaza  
One City Hall Plaza, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612

**RE: Resolution Supporting Foreclosure Prevention/Mitigation Activities**

Dear Councilmember Brunner:

As you are well aware, foreclosures are leaving communities scattered with vacant, poorly maintained houses, with the highest concentrations in Oakland's flatlands. Health and safety problems accompany foreclosures. This matter is of particular concern to the Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) because the communities most impacted by foreclosures and related blight are the communities also most impacted by existing health inequities.

I am writing in support of the Resolution Supporting Foreclosure Prevention/Mitigation Activities. This resolution is an important step toward addressing the negative impacts of the subprime lending crisis on the public's health, especially in low-income communities of color.

The Alameda County Public Health Department previously worked with Causa Justa::Just Cause, a local housing advocacy group, to analyze the health impacts of the foreclosure crisis and support solutions that stop the spread of foreclosures, keep people in their homes, and keep households and communities healthy. Our report, *Rebuilding Neighborhoods, Restoring Health: A Report on the Impact of Foreclosures on Public Health* ([www.acphd.org/media/53646/foreclose1.pdf](http://www.acphd.org/media/53646/foreclose1.pdf)), highlights data from almost 400 households in Oakland's neighborhoods most impacted by the foreclosure crisis.

The report revealed foreclosures' impact on blight and crime. Abandoned houses and over-grown lots are breeding grounds for disease-spreading vectors and attract the dumping of trash. The vacant houses left in the wake of foreclosures are magnets for blight, crime and violence, and are contributing to declining property values and community cohesiveness. The stress of foreclosures is also taking a toll on residents' physical and mental health. The report found that:

- About one in four residents report that the way the neighborhood looks - particularly cleanliness of the neighborhood, homes, and yards - declined from 2007-2009.
- Nearly one-third of residents reported that the amount of abandoned homes, cars, and lots in their neighborhood increased from 2007-2009.
- Thirty percent of residents reported that vandalism had increased, nearly 40% reported increased violence and robberies/thefts, and over 40% saw an increased amount of drug activity in the neighborhood.
- Twenty-five percent of residents reported that their physical health has become worse over the past two years, and 18% reported that their mental health has become worse.
- Seventy-three percent reported having problems like stress, depression, or anxious emotions over the past month some, most, or all of the time.

ACPHD strongly supports this City resolution to expand upon and coordinate efforts that help distressed homeowners and tenants of foreclosed properties access the rights and resources established under recent California law. These efforts will help support the health of individuals and communities impacted by the foreclosure crisis..

Sincerely,

Rebecca Flournoy  
Deputy Director for Planning, Policy and Health Equity  
Alameda County Public Health Department