

March 30, 2020

Gov. Doug Burgum
State of North Dakota
600 E. Boulevard Ave.
Bismarck, ND 58505-0001



RE: COVID-19 rent moratorium/freeze on foreclosures in North Dakota

As COVID-19 continues to spread within North Dakota communities, it's not just concerns about health that have some North Dakotans worried. Housing is also a major issue – particularly for those whose income has been impacted because of involuntary unemployment, extended sickness or required quarantine.

As businesses across the state have laid off or furloughed workers due to the impact COVID-19 has had on the economy, many North Dakotans are struggling to keep their heads above water. Job Service North Dakota received nearly 14,000 claims for unemployment benefits over a recent nine-day period. The staggering figure makes up more than 3 percent of the state's civilian workforce, according the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics.

While the North Dakota Supreme Court recently suspended all housing evictions in light of the coronavirus pandemic, the state of North Dakota needs to do more. To protect the health and safety of all North Dakotans, we are calling on you to order a temporary eviction moratorium and a freeze on foreclosures on residential property in the state, specifically from the issuance of the order, and for 90 days after the emergency ends:

- No foreclosures for residential home owners
- No evictions for renters
- No late fees for either
- No reporting to credit agencies for failure to pay

Providing a temporary moratorium on eviction actions and a freeze on foreclosures would allow people to remain stably housed as they safeguard their health and the health of their families and other North Dakotans.

North Dakota would not be the first to place a moratorium on evictions or a freeze on foreclosures. Multiple other states, counties, cities and judicial districts across the country also have issued directives to suspend evictions during the COVID-19 crisis.

The urgency of deliberate and thoughtful action cannot be overstated. We are eager to work with you and we are willing to be a resource for you throughout this process. We want to ensure implementation of policies like a rent moratorium and freeze on freeze on foreclosures on residential property that will limit the threats presented by this public health crisis.

This is the right thing to do and would be a vital tool to keep North Dakotans in their homes and to mitigate the community spread of COVID-19 in our state. Please take action today and issue an executive order for a temporary eviction moratorium and a freeze on foreclosures on residential property in our state.

Sincerely,

Northern Plains United Labor Council, Missouri Slope Central Labor Council, Northern Valley Labor Council, FM Coalition to End Homelessness, High Plains Fair Housing Center, North Dakota United, the ACLU of North Dakota, North Dakota Farmers Union, North Dakota AFL-CIO, the North Dakota Human Rights Coalition, and the North Dakota Coalition for Homeless People.