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To City Councillors on the Planning & Housing Committee

RE: PH32.4 RentSafeTO Update Report

For over two decades low and moderate income tenants who are members of ACORN have been fighting for Healthy Homes for All. Since our formation in Toronto in 2004, the quality of life for tenants has been our number one issue. This is why in every city that we organize in, across the country, we have a campaign for healthy homes and landlord licensing.

In 2016 and 2017, ACORN and allies were so excited to have finally won the creation of a new 'proactive' enforcement program for property standards in multi residential buildings, called 'RentSafe'. One key component of the program was a colour coded signs, in order to inform tenants of the condition of the building, engage tenants in the 'RentSafe' program, and put pressure on landlords who failed to do repairs.

In 2020 our demand for colour coded signs was finally being realized, 14 years after our initial demand and after hundreds of actions at buildings where tenants were living in substandard conditions and demanding better from their landlords, their city councillors, and city staff. A survey by the City of Toronto to 1900+ residents showed that there was broad support for colour coded signs (Appendix 1). Despite the overwhelming support of tenants, city council voted against colour coded signs. Tenant groups were shocked and have spent the past year and half consulting our members, meeting with councillors, and coming up with concrete demands to improve the 'RentSafe' program.

Today, we hope that you will listen to what tenants have been saying for decades. Colour coded signs which clearly display the rating of the building are a way for you, as our representatives, to show that you are watching these landlords. Previous surveys by ACORN have shown that despite hundreds of thousands of dollars spent advertising 'RentSafe', many tenants are still unaware of the program; colour coded signs are free advertising. And by making tenants aware of 'RentSafe', and the rating of their building, you empower them to call 311, stand up to their landlord, and give them the power to fight for a healthy home. While this is not the only thing we need from you, it is one important piece.

We've waited too long. We need action from you today. We met many of you over the past year and a half, and we hope you will listen to the tenants and support a motion for colour coded signs in buildings as part of 'RentSafe'

Marva Burnett, President, ACORN Canada

Appendix 1

From the City's survey: <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/ph/bgrd/backgroundfile-158865.pdf>

Rating System Colours

Table 11: Agreement on statements related to rating system colours, all respondents.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
The use of the colours green, yellow and red is logical and makes sense.	4.1%	2.9%	4.9%	36.4%	51.6%	0.2%
Apartment buildings that fail the City's evaluation and require a full audit should be issued a sign that is red in colour.	5.2%	2.2%	4.0%	25.4%	62.2%	1.0%
The use of the colours green, yellow and red will be effective in encouraging an apartment building owner to improve the condition of their building.	8.2%	7.5%	12.9%	31.1%	36.1%	4.2%

76.2% of all respondents said colour coded signs would encourage apartment owners to improve the building

87.6% of all respondents said there should be a red sign on buildings that fail the City's evaluation and require a full audit

88.0% of all respondents said that the use of colours green, yellow and red is logical and makes sense

Table 12: Agreement on red rating signs for buildings that receive an audit, renters in apartment buildings (i.e. more than 3 storeys and 10 units)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
Apartment buildings that fail the City's evaluation	3.1%	1.1%	3.1%	23.8.4%	68.2%	0.6%

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
and require a full audit should be issued a sign that is red in colour.						

91.6% of respondents agree that there should be red signs on buildings that fail

Rating Sign Placement

Table 13: Agreement with statements related to the placement of the proposed rating sign, all respondents.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
The sign should be placed near the front entrance in a prominent place.	6.4%	2.8%	4.2%	23.8%	62.1%	0.6%
The sign should be visible from the street or sidewalk so that anyone can see the apartment building's rating.	9.1%	8.3%	11.8%	19.3%	49.9%	1.5%

85.9% of all respondents agree that the colour coded sign should be placed near the front entrance in a prominent place

69.2% of all respondents agree that the colour oded sign should be visible from the street or sidewalk so that anyone can see the apartment building's rating.