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To: [*CI-StPaul](#); [Contact-Council](#); [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: file number: Ord 25-26 Increasing registered vacant building fines
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file number: Ord 25-26 - proposed increase of registered vacant building fine.

I live in St. Paul at 105 Leech Street. I want to speak out against increasing the registered vacant buildings fine by 10%. It was doubled just a few years ago and impacts the owner-occupied homes of seniors who lose their homes because they cannot pay the fines and make the repairs. The fine isn't a one-time thing; it is every year until the issues are resolved. The current \$5000 registration fee is a poverty penalty for elderly homeowners.

The elderly homeowners who are affected by this do not have the financial resources to hire lawyers, and most won't file human rights or fair housing complaints. Housing code compliance is not enforced evenly in St. Paul.

It is one thing if a person wants to leave a house vacant and they voluntarily register it, but that isn't always the case. Some homes become vacant when building inspectors condemn them, and the owners are forced to leave and pay a \$5000 fine for leaving the house vacant. How about a little mercy? These people are not criminals; they are our neighbors and are worthy of some compassion.

The fines seem less excessive for landlords, corporations, and commercial properties, but to ask Grandma to pay them seems unreasonable and cruel.

Property taxes and the cost of living have gone up to ridiculous levels. People are struggling to survive. Our housing stock is old, and our population is ageing. This is an issue that the whole country is facing. There is not enough affordable housing for the elderly. Condemning their houses and fining the owners when they cannot make the repairs isn't a good plan. We can do better.

Please do not raise the registered vacant building fee for owner-occupied homes. Consider reducing the fines by 100% for owner-occupied homes, especially when the owner-occupants are over 65.

Thank you

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