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Tenants granted foreclosure help

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The Los Angeles City Council approved a new law Wednesday that puts a one-year moratorium on banks evicting tenants when they foreclose apartment buildings and houses used as rental property.

The law, proposed by City Council President Eric Garcetti, came after Countrywide pressured tenants in foreclosed apartments to leave their units in violation of the city's tenant protection rules.

After the banks complained that they did not understand that tenant protections applied to them, Garcetti's office said, the councilman proposed the law to protect tenants.

The law could apply to thousands of families; the Inner City Law Center estimated that more than 3,800 rental units are in buildings that were foreclosed upon this year.

Apartment owners had expressed concerns that the law represented an attempt to expand the city's controversial rent-control laws, but city leaders said they are only trying to protect tenants during the foreclosure crisis.

-- Jessica Garrison LOS ANGELES