

NDP forces legislature that will address manufactured homes

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The NDP wants to create more rights for renters of homes, and on Tuesday the official opposition brought forward a series of private member's bills to the legislative assembly in Victoria.

Opposition MLAs are also pushing for amendments to the Manufactured Homes Tenancy Act. The bill calls for a line to address residents who face eviction when parks are redeveloped.

"I've certainly raised the issues about what has happened in the Alberni Valley," Alberni-Pacific Rim MLA Scott Fraser said.

"This is key because we've seen manufactured home residents evicted and it's potentially leading to homelessness in the Valley, which is a problem already."

In November, residents at Falls Road Park in Port Alberni were shocked when a landlord decided to move ahead with redevelopment without giving notice of the Riverbank Estate Project. Some tenants eventually walked away from their demolished homes.

Then in December, Port Alberni city council developed a mobile home park redevelopment policy. Many critics slammed the document, saying there is little protection for residents. The policy called for more notification for residents but no financial incentive was given for tenants of now demolished homes.

Various arguments for tenants' rights are topics during the last day of legislature's spring session, with several MLAs taking charge on several tenancy issues.

Vancouver-West End MLA Spencer Chandra Herbert looks to eliminate the ability for landlords to overcharge tenants.

"Everybody thinks the maximum rate to increase rent is 4%, but there is a clause that the B.C. Liberals put into the Residential Tenancy Act that allows landlords to apply for increases over and above that."

An increase of about 73% was proposed by a landlord based on prices at near-by locations.

A Vancouver couple took the landlord to the Supreme Court of Canada before ruling in favour of the tenants.

Other landlords convince tenants, often elderly, to sign for a larger increase.

The NDPs also spoke to a bill to increase the amount of time a person has to make a late payment on rent from 10 to 14 days.

The bills are currently on the order papers and can be called up for a second reading debate and perhaps adoption.

"That can happen any time between now and the next throne speech, so a year from now," Fraser said.

The bill would then go on to a third reading and through a committee of consultants.

The party also hopes to increase the amount of time tenants are given before evicted for renovation - from two up to four months.

"We've tried this before," Fraser said. "Liberals have a habit of cancelling

whole sessions."

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