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## PRESS RELEASE

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### Rental Housing Association of Washington sues Seattle over rental caps on move-in fees

**Seattle, WA** – May 30, 2017 – After careful legal review, the Rental Housing Association of Washington filed a lawsuit in King County Superior Court this morning to overturn Seattle’s recently adopted ordinance regulating tenant move-in fees and requiring landlords to extend payment plans to tenants.

The ordinance, passed unanimously last December by Seattle City Council, purports to assist tenants by restricting the amounts of deposits and non-refundable fees that may be charged by a landlord, restricting what those charges may be assessed for and how they may be applied, and by allowing tenants to request payment plans on those amounts.

“The City, rather than taking direct municipal action to ensure affordable housing, has crossed a line established by both state statute and the state constitution,” said RHAWA Legal Defense Fund Chair, Chris Benis.

The ordinance is based on the flawed concept that Seattle’s housing affordability issues can be solved by controlling rental fees and requiring landlords to allow tenant payment plans. Landlords placed in a position of higher risk must look for ways to offset that risk, typically by raising their qualification standards. Others may choose to simply sell, meaning the permanent loss of more of Seattle’s remaining affordable housing.

“We don’t casually decide to sue the City of Seattle. Our preference is to work proactively *with* government, but the impacts of this ordinance on small, independent landlords is too great to ignore,” said RHAWA Executive Director, Melany Brown. “We also can’t ignore that this ordinance is just one of several adopted by the Seattle City Council in the last two years, such as the “First in Time” requirement, that overreach. They bow to political expediency without regard to compliance with state statute and Washington Constitution protections for all citizens, including landlords.”

### About Rental Housing Association of Washington

RHAWA is the State’s largest association of rental property owners, managers, and investors representing over 5,400 rental housing owners statewide, with over 4,000 owning units in the City of Seattle. Of those Seattle owners, 88% own less than 4 rental units. A not-for-profit organization, its mission is to advance the general welfare of the rental housing industry and provide its members with a full range of products and services including tenant screening, leasing forms, and education.

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