



Department of Fair Employment & Housing

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DFEH Sues Federally-Subsidized Apartment Complex for Disability Discrimination

Owner and Managers charged with failing to accommodate disabled tenant

Sacramento - The Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH), California's civil rights agency, announced today a lawsuit against the owner, management company, and individual managers of Sutter Village, a 74-unit federally subsidized apartment complex in Yuba City, California. The lawsuit alleges that Sutter Village violated state and federal civil rights laws by repeatedly failing to accommodate and unreasonably delaying a quadriplegic tenant's request for a reasonable accommodation.

The suit filed in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California (case number 2:22-at-00339) alleges violations of the Federal Fair Housing Act and the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA), which prohibit discrimination against tenants on the basis of disability.

"Housing providers that fail to provide reasonable accommodations to make housing accessible to tenants with disabilities violate longstanding legal protections," said DFEH Director Kevin Kish. "DFEH is committed to vigorous enforcement of these protections to ensure all Californians have equal access to housing, regardless of disability."

According to the lawsuit, a quadriplegic tenant who uses a wheelchair repeatedly requested to move to a ground floor apartment. The tenant's requests became more urgent when the only elevator at Sutter Village began to operate intermittently, confining her to her third-floor apartment. Despite the tenant's repeated requests, managers failed to inform her as suitable apartments became available. The tenant was also told that she would need to pay for necessary accessibility features even though as a recipient of federal financial assistance, the housing provider has an obligation to pay for accessibility modifications unless certain conditions are met. The lawsuit seeks injunctive relief and monetary damages for the tenant.

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DFEH is the state agency charged with enforcing California's civil rights laws. The mission of DFEH is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations and from hate violence and human trafficking. For more information, visit DFEH's web site at www.dfeh.ca.gov.

