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Esquimalt tenants organize to fight eviction for development

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Times Colonist

Renters who live in two apartment buildings set to be demolished to make way for a 21-storey rental tower near CFB Esquimalt are banding together in hopes of staving off their eviction.

Residents at the nearly identical 1970s-era four-storey apartment buildings at 1340 Sussex St. and 1337 Saunders St. have formed a tenants association linked to the Victoria Tenants Union, a renter advocacy group.

The Nelson Street Tenant Association, named after the street fronting the two apartment complexes, said a majority of the 68 households in the two buildings have joined the association, which is demanding to be recognized as a collective bargaining unit.

In June, Intracorp Homes BC submitted a rezoning application to replace the two apartment buildings owned by Belmont Properties with a 335-unit,



Sean Sullivan is one of the tenants who could lose his home at 1337 Saunders St. in Esquimalt to make way for a new development. ADRIAN LAM, TC

21-storey rental tower, which would also include commercial space.

Nelson Street Tenant Association member Sean Sullivan, who lives at 1337 Saunders St., said residents have

been told they have to be out of the building by next fall.

Tenants first began receiving notice that the building was going to be torn down about three months ago, but no formal eviction notices have been served, he said.

Sullivan, who shares an \$1,800 monthly rent bill with a roommate, said an equivalent two-bedroom apartment in today's rental market would likely cost \$800 more per month.

"Nobody should have to choose between whether they can have lights on in their house or [whether] they eat," he said. "You make \$30,000 a year, you should be able to have a roof over your head."

Sullivan said he personally appealed to Premier David Eby last month when Eby visited his workplace, a downtown vinyl shop, as part of a pre-election campaign tour.

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