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AMENDMENTS PROPOSED TO RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT

Finance Minister Greg Selinger today introduced proposed amendments to Manitoba's Residential Tenancies Act which include provisions which would allow landlords to request a pet deposit.

"By allowing a landlord to collect a separate pet damage deposit, we are hoping more landlords will permit pets," said Selinger. "The pet deposit would act as a damage deposit specific to any damage to a rental property caused by a pet."

Landlords in Manitoba are not required to accept pets but, if they choose to do so, they would be entitled to collect a pet damage deposit of one half month's rent in addition to the existing security deposit.

Other proposed amendments would give the director of the Residential Tenancies Branch authority to:

- Deal with tenancy agreements under which services such as meals, laundry or housekeeping services are provided by the landlord for a separate charge in addition to rent. Proposals include requiring a standard tenancy agreement be used which would set out the tenant services provided, written notice for any increase in the charge for tenant services and a process for dealing with claims against the tenant services security deposit.
- Determine claims by landlords against guarantors where a tenant has defaulted in their obligation under a tenancy agreement such as paying rent.
- Impose administrative penalties on landlords and tenants for failing to comply with orders made under specified sections of the act or contravening those sections, such as a landlord's duty not to withhold vital services and a tenant's duty not to impair the safety of others in the building.

"We are pleased to introduce additional protections for seniors. Hospitality services such as meals, laundry and housekeeping will now be covered by the act. If landlords want to increase the rates charged for these services or withdraw or reduce services, they will now have to adhere to the conditions under the Residential Tenancies Act such as providing notice and opportunities for appeals," said Selinger.

In addition, to streamlining hearings before the Residential Tenancies Commission on appeal, the amendment would give authority for certain matters to be heard by the chief commissioner or a deputy chief commissioner instead of a panel of three commissioners.

The bill can be seen at www.manitoba.ca/rtb.

