

Dear Committee,

I am very opposed to sb 611 and hope you will vote no on the bill as it stands. I have owned a small handful of rental properties for 26 years.

Housing is actually being impacted nationwide right now by lack of supply and decline in building over the last decade. The state of Oregon need to reverse this trend, not punish the current providers of affordable housing. This bill and 608 before it (with the rent control and 1/12 payment to tenant when there is a necessary reason to terminate the tenancy relationship), incentivizes housing providers to regularly increase rents and punishes housing providers for not increasing rent with each renewal. This knee jerk reaction of sb 611 might seem beneficial, but it only provides very temporary relief and then has severely detrimental effects to both tenants and landlords, and particularly disproportionately affects minorities and low income families.

I feel there is a huge disparity as well between rentals in mobile home parks and regular residential rentals and the 2 should be separated. Someone with significant investment in their mobile home is under different parameters than typical rentals. There is much less improvements, repairs, maintenance etc needed with a mobile home park and indeed mobile home owners are held hostage by unwarranted rent increases – such owners cannot just pick up and move. Therefore, mobile home parks should be under separate oversight where a higher level of government involvement is warranted. Allowing mobile home park owners to flow with inflation should indeed be allowable, but just raising rates willy nilly should not be under the same boat as residential rentals – please consider separating the 2.

There are definitely negative consequences by this bill, particularly against minorities and other vulnerable people. This bill does not address the root causes of the affordable housing crisis such as limited land supply, restrictive zoning laws, and inadequate transportation. The high cost of living in Oregon is not caused solely from high rents. Addressing the above issues would require a more comprehensive approach that involves collaboration between government, developers, and community groups, not targeting the housing providers, many of whom simply cannot afford these proposals and will be forced out of business.

This bill discourage investment in the housing market when one can't raise rents to meet market rates. This leads to lower overall quality available and less new construction if can't recoup costs (resulting in shortage of new units) exacerbating existing affordable housing crisis. Certainly landlords will have less incentive to maintain or improve their properties, if they cannot recapture any of this investment. Again, this disproportionately affects marginalized communities.

It creates disincentive to rent to low-income tenants, making landlords more selective in choosing tenants that they perceive will be able to pay rents consistently. This could lead to discrimination against low-income tenants or those with less stable income and instead we should strive to create equal opportunities for all citizens. This bill will cause low-income individuals to not be able to find affordable housing. As well tenants who have been in place will not move, causing the majority of the slim benefits to them, not to the ones who are homeless or not in stable housing. This bill just has a cyclic effect of making things worse and worse for both tenants and the economy. It will lead to longer waiting lists and less willingness to accept tenants who rely on government assistance programs. It is totally counterproductive to the goal of rent control.

SB611 will lead to segregation of neighborhoods by income level, which will perpetuate existing patterns of racial and socioeconomic segregation. This can also have a discriminatory impact by limiting the access of certain groups to certain areas. This is happening in every major city in Oregon.

I am a “small” landlord of a handful of properties, but I very much fear this bill will lead to me having to leave the state of Oregon with my rental properties. These rental properties will then be lost. They already don’t make much sense financially, being older single family homes with much higher costs of maintenance and repairs than the new apartments and other building units out there. One of our homes is over 100 years old. However, we have been able to make it work, and have enjoyed providing affordable housing to families and seniors. One current house houses a single mom with three children – another 90 year old house was a home for an 80 year old retiree. But should I need to do a major repair rendering the home uninhabitable, there is no way I could afford a quarter of a year of gross payment to a tenant. We just had a severe fire go through our town – this payment would not be covered by insurance. We also had a major plumbing leak years ago which created instant devastation to us and the family that lived there. I do not have a savings pot of 3 times the rent to hand over to someone, much less deal with a catastrophe. My rents must increase to try to create this savings, for a possible future need. That amount however spread over 5 rental units is astronomical. There just isn’t that kind of profit in my business.

I urge you to vote no on this bill. Let’s instead collaborate to incentivize MORE rentals, more housing, more housing development, more government provided housing. We are in a housing crisis for sure. In southern Oregon alone, we had over 2500 housing units knocked out overnight. But sniping the housing providers, making them hobbled even more to try to continue providing housing, just isn’t the way. Because its glaringly obvious, under these conditions of not being able to be at market rent, not being able to invest in the continued maintenance and repair of the homes, not being able to use a home when needed for one’s own children or to do a major repair (because they can’t afford a quarter of a year of payment), decimates the housing provider for sure, but all the unintended consequences to the vulnerable population of low income individuals, families, and minorities is equally harmful. Please vote no. I appreciate all the thought and effort that has gone into this bill, but it is not the way.

Thank you.

Sheri Bowland