

February 4th, 2019

Dear Chari Fagan, Vice Chair Girod and members of the Senate Committee on Housing,

I am writing In regards to Senate Bill 608. One of which I strongly oppose. I would like to have been able to give my testimonial in person, but I was unable to make the drive to Salem.

My name is Stephanie Shaffer. I am the director of assets for WDC Properties. Our focus is on high-efficiency living spaces in the Portland metro area, with the goal of reducing carbon footprint and create low-waste homes within the community. My company is also a member of Multifamily NW, which is the largest association group representing rental providers across the state.

I'd like to write about my personal experience in the industry. I have worked in this industry for over 20 years, including for some of the largest companies in our industry. Trammel Crow, Riverstone and Pinnacle, along with a local developer previously known as Keys Pacific.

For housing providers such as our company, stability is a high priority. We want good residents, and then we want them to stay if they want. That means we often make the decision to not increase rent or keep any rental increases low. Understanding that keeping our residents and their stability is a greater value. (High turnover creates risk, and additional work which then leads to more costs). However, some cases do arise where the residents rent should be increased higher or we do need to ask them to leave. We are a business and we need to bring in enough income in order to maintain our properties to livable standards and to keep up with the growing market. This is very challenging if we are held to certain rent increases. In addition, certain properties demand a higher rent and residents are willing to pay. This is what makes Portland's housing market so diverse.

There is unfortunately a false narrative out there about the "evil" landlord, intent on gauging residents. That has simply not been my experience. Everywhere that I have worked, there have been many policies in place to make sure that resident rights are protected. It is both the right thing to do, and it is smart business. While no disrespect is meant to property owners/landlords that own 4 or less units, but in my experience, those individuals are ones that tend to fly below the radar and do not follow policy properly. Why are they exempt from this bill? I personally have rented from two individual homeowners, in the West Hills of Portland, where I have had to educate them as the tenant. Thankfully, my job is to know the law, therefore I was able to protect myself. If I was a tenant off the street without Property Management experience, I would have been taken advantage of.

I agree that work needs to be done to address the affordability crisis. However, we believe that we need to incentivize supply. I have seen companies pull out of development projects in our region because of uncertainty they face in the regulatory market. That is the opposite of what we need.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Shaffer
Director of Assets
WDC Properties
EkoLiving