Feb 18, 2019

Senate Committee on Housing
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 595

Chair Fagan, Vice Chair Girod, and members of the committee

Oregon Food Bank supports SB 595. This new legislation provides critical funding for local housing efforts for our struggling counties and cities throughout the state.

Oregon Food Bank believes that no one should be hungry and that hunger starves the human spirit. We provide food assistance to anyone who needs it through our network of regional food banks, pantries and emergency meal sites. In an average month, an estimated 260,000 people in Oregon and Clark County, Washington receive food from a pantry.

Oregon Food Bank's mission is to end hunger and its root causes. We know that the nexus between housing and hunger is strong. Clients increasingly tell us that they have to make the tough choice between rent and food. They speak of ever-increasing rents, fear of evictions and the inability to find an affordable place to call home. Some speak of becoming homeless for the first time because they cannot find an affordable place to live.

In Tillamook County, and in other parts of our state that have vibrant tourist economies, we are struggling with the rapid rise of short-term rentals and its negative impacts on local housing availability and affordability. Homes that previously had provided housing to long-term residents of these communities are instead operated as vacation rentals, leaving fewer housing options for residents. This has resulted in many tourism industry employees struggling to find affordable places to call home, and for some, becoming homeless.

This bill offers an innovative solution: tourists who rent these short-term rentals would pay the transient lodging tax and would be helping contribute to solutions to the local housing crisis.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Mis Carlson-Swanson
Branch Services Manager
Oregon Food Bank – Tillamook County Services

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