



I am the President of Commonwealth Real Estate Services, a company formed in Oregon to manage different types of affordable housing, including multi-family and manufactured home communities. We provide professional management services to over 7,000 housing units in the state.

While we understand that HB 2761 is well-intentioned, with the goal of preventing limited English-speaking residents from failing to understand rental documents, we work closely with all our applicants for residency to make sure they understand their leasing documents and understand what their obligations will be. This means meeting with applicants in person and personally going through all the documents with them. It is our experience that most applicants with limited English-speaking skills have a family member or friend who assists them with the process as well.

We respectfully oppose HB 2761. At a time when many community owners are owed significant amounts of money as a result of Covid as a result of eviction moratoria causing loss of rental income, where we have personally seen an increase in delinquent rent across our Oregon portfolio of over \$700,000 from a year ago, HB 2761 would create additional strain and expense by requiring rental documents to be translated into 5 languages. As I mentioned, we spend time with all of our applicants reviewing rental documents and answering questions, and we do not condone anyone being taken advantage of in the process, but this bill creates an unfair burden on Manufactured Home Communities and management.

While good intentions may be at play in HB 2761, translating legal documents is a complex task requiring not only language skills, but also legal knowledge. Will the state provide the needed resources to provide personnel and training for the translations so that management and tenants will know that they are accurate?

We believe that the translation requirement will actually result not only in increased costs, but also increased confusion for both tenants and management. In addition, overall, the burden of producing translations will increase the overall cost of housing and negatively impact affordable housing in the State of Oregon. For example:

- The expense of translation must be incurred even for one tenant; the statute does not require a minimum number of tenants to make a request for a translation.
- No two communities are alike and rental documents necessarily differ across properties, management companies, and owners; universal translations will be impossible.
- Often times, rental documents are modified throughout the year creating an ongoing financial burden for translation.
- Our on-site management teams, who typically speak English, will not be able to read the translations and answer questions about them.
- Legal systems in different countries vary a lot and terminology is different; who will be responsible for establishing criteria for translation and ensuring the documents are accurate? A translator will need to know and understand all language and terminology variations; will translators be certified?



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- While we try to make our rental documents as easy to understand as possible, there is often times not much room for flexibility; legal documents often contain language or terms that native speakers do not fully understand or misuse; how will these issues be handled in translation?
- Similarly, punctuation and syntax are not universal; translations however must follow the same rules as the original, and missing a comma may be enough to create ambiguity in legal contracts or create an omission or interpretation that can change terms and conditions; how will these issues be treated by the courts?

Finally, I have two concerns I wanted to flag for the committee. First, it is my understanding resident owned communities are excluded from this requirement thanks to an amendment in the House. Frankly, I don't understand the logic of this, they are just as likely to have non-English speaking applicants as privately owned Manufactured Home Communities. This is blatantly unfair and shows the bias that policymakers seem to have towards resident-owned communities at the expense of other forms of owners of Manufactured Home Communities. Second, again I am opposed to this bill, but I also frankly do not understand why Manufactured Home properties are being solely targeted as a rental housing asset class to provide these burdensome translation services.

I urge you to vote NO on HB 2761. While it may be well-intentioned, the many pitfalls associated with translation will cause more confusion and uncertainty than exists today.

Best Regards,

Adam Cook
President