

Submitter: Victoria Whitman

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB611

I have been a full-time realtor and landlord here in Eugene for the past 26 years. My family and I work hard to provide nice homes for people at reasonable rents. We have worked for over 15 years to pay down our properties hoping to get to a point that they might be able to eventually support both my brother and I when we retire. We aren't there yet.

I understand and support the desire to help people find and keep housing, but these proposed renter protections are taking a backward approach to the problem — you are assuming that landlords are the cause of our community's housing problem. The real cause of our housing problem is simply a lack of housing. Eugene has done multiple studies that cost thousands of dollars over the past 25 years. All of them predicted a housing shortage if the city didn't allow for more infill &/or extend the Urban Growth Boundary. None of those things were acted upon until very recently — once there was already a serious problem. We have a serious housing shortage — not just rentals, but housing at all levels. Punishing the people that ARE providing housing is short sighted and won't create better outcomes for renters. Housing costs are purely based on supply and demand and for decades we've under-built, which consequently limited supply. If there were sufficient housing available prices would go down. Tenants would have choices and more power. Encouraging and enabling people who want to create more housing, whether that means duplexing their existing home, adding 4 units to a larger lot or building homes &/or apartments, especially in areas besides just campus would help provide the housing everyone seeks. This issue hasn't been caused by predatory landlords. It's caused due to a lack of options for tenants.

Instead of penalizing landlords, Eugene should encourage landlords to keep their rentals and add more. I acknowledge that the City has loosened some of the regulations controlling development in the past few years with the goal of encouraging infill. That said, it should have been done years ago and there needs to be more incentives to truly increase the amount of housing in town. The incentives currently being offered are very challenging to utilize for anyone but large corporations. Realistic benefits need to be made available if you genuinely want to see the housing supply increase.

I implore you not to pass Phase II Renter Protections, at the very least to modify them to encourage a healthy stock of rentals. Look to objective studies and engage landlords in the process, as actual interactions between landlords & tenants are highly complex.

Thank you for your attention.

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