

Good morning Chair Dexter, Vice-Chairs Gamba and Helfritch, members of the housing and homeless committee, and everyone gathered here today. My name is **Heather Coffman**. I live in Southern Oregon and I want to first thank you for taking time to hear my testimony in support of HB 3462 ensuring communities like mine have access to emergency housing for all their residents in climate disasters, like the 2020 wildfires. I am here to personally speak with you about the Alameda fires that ripped through Southern Oregon leaving 3 towns and the community of southern Oregon as a whole smoldering in its aftermath.

I have lived in the Rogue Valley for most of my life, I went to Phoenix high the same high school that my mother and grandmother went to. My family has lived in this valley for more than 100 years. When you see your history literally turned to ash it breaks something in you. I was blessed to not be displaced. However As I helped at the relief center I was more heartbroken then ever to see so many people in crisis but the thing that hurt the most were the children. I was working 10 to 14 hrs a day at the expo relief center. One day I saw a woman speaking to a young girl maybe 6 yrs old. She was trying to explain to her why they could not go home, that they would never be able to go back because they did not own that home.

This was not a one time occurrence. I witnessed it time and again. As a parent how do you tell a child that the reason they can't go home is because of a piece of paper. Men draw lines on maps blocking those on the other side from a better life. I understand this is the way of the world. Some of the people that have worked the hardest in this valley most of their lives, have done the jobs that no one wanted. Are the people that have suffered the most. They still suffer years after the ashes have cooled. We have entire families sleeping in a spare room here or on a friend's floor there. Children's education suffers because they cannot get to school or because they are too embarrassed from having to wear dirty or cast off clothes. People are still struggling with the food and housing dilemma, often having to pick one or the other.

HB 3462 helps ensure that fair housing standards are applied in the case of emergency housing. I believe that this protection would have gotten more families into acceptable and safe housing sooner. HB 3462 will help guarantee that federal resources are spread equally throughout the entire community. We have seen first hand that disasters do not discriminate whether it's an orchard worker, baker, a child, an elder a business owner, documented or not disasters take from us all.

I urge you to support HB 3462. Thank you for your time.