



HB 3462 - Testimony to Senate Committee on Housing and Development

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Good Morning Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, and members of the Senate Housing and Development Committee.

My name is Katie Sawicki, I work for Unite Oregon as the Campaigns Manager. I have had the honor of working alongside Rogue Valley community members and organizers in shaping and advocating for the passage of HB 3462, Emergency Housing 4 All.

We have powerful speakers here today that will testify on why this bill is necessary, so I'll be brief in providing context. In short, when the wildfires hit in 2020, we learned that not all Oregonians had the same experiences in recovery. After their homes had burned down, many of our communities, including migrant farmworkers, their children, and other vital members of our workforce, were turned away from shelter or temporary housing and other services for a number of reasons—sometimes because of the language they spoke, nation of origin, their documentation status, or presumptions made about their family members' documentation status. This, coupled with threats of intervention by ICE, meant people did not have access to resources they desperately needed. A community survey conducted by Unite Oregon in 2021 found 40% of our communities displaced by wildfires were not able to access government services. 70% of those that qualified had to wait 3 months to a year to get temporary housing and many did not feel safe in temporary housing. We saw firsthand that without clear and strong standards and best practices, the families we serve ultimately lose out on the opportunity to be first in line for resources alongside their neighbors who had experienced the same devastation.

HB 3462 puts us two steps closer to more equitable recovery policy. It extends fair housing laws to all emergency housing provided by the Office of Emergency Management, Office of Community Housing Services, and Office of Human Services. Where there is gray area in non discriminatory housing, this bill codifies and makes clear that Oregon's fair housing and non discrimination laws relating to shelters and temporary housing also apply in an emergency. It asks the state to take responsibility for community members who have been displaced in an emergency and do not qualify for FEMA resources because of their immigration status.

Some additional clarifying and additional points: This bill only applies to instances where a state of Emergency has been declared. We have worked with community partners, as well as the Office of Emergency Management and the Office of Community Housing

Services to ensure this aligns with gaps they have also seen. We have also met with the Governor's office whose agenda aligns with the bill in its current form.

I want to end here, and ask my colleagues and community leaders to talk more about why this bill is needed. Thank you for your time, I urge your support for HB 3462.