



HOUSING SENIORS | CREATING HOPE | PILOTING CHANGE

March 3, 2025

Senator Khanh Pham
Chair, Senate Committee on Housing and Development
900 Court St NE, S-409
Salem, OR 97301

RE: **Support for SB 973**

Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share testimony, on behalf of Northwest Pilot Project, in strong support of SB 973 which strengthens the notice requirements for residents of expiring affordable housing.

Northwest Pilot Project (NWPP) is a social service agency with over five decades of experience in providing housing stabilization services to low and very low-income older adults, age 55 and over, experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Multnomah County. As a service provider for older adults, who are the fastest growing age segment of the population experiencing homelessness,¹ we know that there is a direct link between rental cost burdens for low-income seniors and their risk of homelessness. With more than half of all older adult renter households being cost burdened (paying more than 30% of their rent),² any increase in the cost of rent places an unbearable strain on households that are already struggling. The threat of displacement due to rent increases only exacerbates the risk of further homelessness and prolonged housing instability for low-income seniors.

Over the next 10 years, the affordability restrictions on 7,500 units of affordable rental housing will expire, threatening the security of countless seniors on fixed incomes who will have few other housing options affordable to them in Oregon's private rental market. SB 973 will provide residents of expiring affordable housing with the notice they require and deserve in order to have adequate time

¹ Homelessness Among Older Adults: An Emerging Crisis (Generations Journal, Summer 2020), Dr. Margot Kushel, American Society on Aging. <https://generations.asaging.org/homelessness-older-adults-poverty-health>

² Issue Brief: Low-Income Older Adults Face Unaffordable Rents, Driving Housing Instability and Homelessness (February 2021), Justice In Aging. <https://justiceinaging.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Older-Adults-Rental-Housing-Burdens.pdf>

to find alternative housing options. Specifically, the bill requires that landlords inform applicants for affordable housing of the date when the property's affordability restrictions end and provide a minimum 30-month advanced notice of the affordability expiration date to all existing tenants. Considering that wait lists on many subsidized housing properties are 3-5 years long, this lead time is crucial for low-income residents, especially older adults who often need additional support and accommodations to find new housing that they can afford.

In addition, for residents living at the property at the time of expiration, SB 973 requires that the notice given to tenants includes translation information in the five most commonly spoken languages in Oregon. Affordable housing notices exclusively written in English can cause confusion and fear for non-English speaking renters in the state of Oregon, especially for older adults who may struggle to access the internet and other translation resources. By requiring landlords to provide translation resources with the affordability expiration notice, more low-income Oregonians will be able to understand their notice and then prepare to find new housing.

SB 973 is a reasonable measure to address the crisis we are currently facing with thousands of affordable housing units losing their affordability in the coming years. We thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,

Yoni Kahn
Advocacy Director
Northwest Pilot Project