

I represent @ 70 landlords in Florence Oregon. In Florence, we rely heavily on private owners, renting out single family residences to meet some semblance of affordable housing in our area. The typical home is in the rental pool for 3 to 5 years, before being sold as a primary residence. We get the house after Mom dies. Or when Dad goes into the rest home. And we get it up until the kids hit college, or another event that requires liquidity. We need those homes desperately in these rural towns to meet the housing needs of the community. The most recent changes have had a chilling effect : more people taking the homes to market, rather than renting them out. I would estimate that we lost about 7-10% of our rental pool in Florence in the last 12 months. Since SB 608, my firm has seen about a 30% exit rate at vacancy (it normally is closer to 10%) - Owners are closing up shop, and selling the homes, rather than re-renting over concerns about the landscape that they are renting in. 1031 activity has slowed down tremendously. Investors are frequently choosing to buy homes in other states.

I am very concerned about any form of rent "moratorium," "abeyance" or any other solution that puts this crisis on the back of the housing providers. Of the various proposals, I have heard floated, I support direct rent assistance payments to landlords.

Some talking points from ORHA that I am in agreement with (my anecdotes, emphasis and comments in bold.) :

- Disaster relief needs to be for both tenants and landlords to ensure that renters retain their housing and landlords can continue to operate. Direct payments to landlords will keep the supply chain functioning, including mortgages, insurance, maintenance, etc. This isn't just about making sure that landlords get their money. **Housing stability for our communities should be front and center during this crisis. (The last thing we need to leave this crisis with, is less workforce housing)**
- A moratorium on mortgage payments provides some relief, but it doesn't provide income. Some landlords depend on their tenants' rent payments for their main source of income for food, medicine and utilities; **we don't want to create a new category of people who need help. (I have many owners, that I manage a single property for and the income from these properties directly funds the living or care-giving expenses of the owner or a parent. In fact, I spoke with one today, who was very concerned with making her caregiving payment if the renters were told not to pay rent.)**
- Rental properties require maintenance. If landlords don't have the money to pay for needed maintenance due to the crisis, they may face punitive damage awards for failure to maintain the unit.
- As our government officials pour money into the economy to mitigate the short- and long-term impacts of this crisis, part of what needs to happen is for people to keep buying goods and services to lubricate the economy and minimize the damage we are facing. Direct payments to landlords for the tenants who need help will be a vital way to infuse funds in to the local economies.

- **Not all tenants need help.** While many have been temporarily suspended from working, many are working from home, or have resources available to help them weather the storm. There needs to be some sort of needs test to determine whether the inability to pay rent is related to Covid-19 or not. Tenants should have to provide some sort of documentation from their employer that there is no work available, and that unemployment benefits for the household do not meet their needs for food, shelter and utilities. Gathering this data could also provide much needed information to the state regarding impacted communities. This could help inform future planning for unexpected crises that will undoubtedly come our way. **(I have had 2 tenants call, not asking for rent breaks, but letting me know their situations - In both situations, I am lucky enough to have owners that are in a position to work with them. In fact, a number of my owners have called and given me pro-active guidance on what they can do to help tenants)**

- Other pressing issues for some landlords are current pending notices for bad behavior by tenants, or termination notices issued prior to this time. Can these evictions still be processed and executed, or do landlords have to sit tight while the tenant continues to damage the property, disturb the quiet enjoyment of the neighbors, and even commit criminal acts while being protected from eviction? Also, under current law, once a notice of termination has expired, if the landlord accepts rent for any period beyond the termination date, they waive their right to terminate on that notice. With the implementation of SB 608 and the subsequent restrictions on termination of tenancy after the first year, a landlord could get into a real bind. Can waiver rules be temporarily suspended due to this crisis allowing landlords to accept rent, but still keep their notice valid?

James Booth, Office Manager  
Dolphin Property Management

Office: 1245 Rhododendron, Unit B - Florence, Oregon 97439

*Mailing: P.O. Box 1668, Florence, Oregon, 97439*

Phone 541-997-7368 Fax 541-997-9440  
website : <http://florencedolphinproperty.com/>