

Hello Governor Brown and Members of the Committee on Coronavirus Response,

I have been providing rental housing to Oregon residents for 8 years. I currently have one unit in Portland and two in Milwaukie. I recognize the extraordinary situation that we are now in requires sacrifice on everybody's part. I very much want to help my fellow Oregonians that have lost their jobs because of the COVID-19 pandemic, including my current tenants.

Unfortunately, my husband is one of the thousands who lost his job unexpectedly last week due to this crisis. I'm grateful that there are protections in place for tenants that have suffered financially as well, but knowing that one or more of our tenants may not be able to pay their rent for two to three months (or longer!) puts us at the very real risk of being unable to fulfill our own financial obligations as housing providers.

We have intentionally kept our rents below market rates and therefore have enjoyed long-term relationships with our tenants; but this means that we have limited cash reserves, and certainly not enough to make it with two or more months of no rental income at all. Because of this, I'm joining other rental providers in asking that you:

1. Establish a statewide emergency rental assistance program that benefits tenants by keeping them in place and landlords like myself by keeping us solvent. This needs to be in place by April 1, 2020, so that we may meet our April mortgage obligations.
2. Even if there is a rental assistance program in place, there will likely be some housing providers that will need some form of mortgage forbearance. I ask that you require state-chartered lenders to grant us a temporary moratorium on debt service payments. This should be in place at least as long as the moratorium on evictions for non-payment of rent.

Thank you for your service, especially during these difficult times. I hope you'll consider these requests seriously.

Sincerely,

Laura Bower
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she/her