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March 7, 2013

Rep. Carolyn Tomei
900 Court St. NE, H-279
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Oregon House Bill 2980

Dear Representative Tomei,

I am writing you today on behalf of local nonprofit Hacienda Community Development Corporation in support of Oregon House Bill 2980. We are a Latino CDC that strengthens Oregon families by providing affordable housing, homeownership support, economic advancement and educational opportunities. Hacienda CDC utilized Farmworker Tax Credits to build Plaza Los Robles in Molalla, a 24 unit residential housing community for low income farmworkers and their families.

In 2004 Hacienda CDC researched the rural, agricultural town of Mollala and found there were approximately 2,833 year-round farm workers in Clackamas County and only 104 units of housing affordable specifically for farmworkers. This research compelled Hacienda CDC to do something about the appalling situation many farm workers found themselves in due to the lack of housing in the area. Despite some initial opposition to the development from more established Mollala residents, Hacienda CDC and its partners obtained assistance from Oregon Farmworker Tax Credits to create 24 units of dignified affordable housing in 2006. Plaza Los Robles not only serves as a roof over the heads of this vulnerable population, but as an inspirational place where the community meets in the conference room and gains enrichment at the learning center. Kids are able to play on the half-court basketball facility and fully accessorized playgrounds. Mollala residents have since testified that the development has added to the community and that they appreciate the investment.

Residents at Plaza Los Robles, like all of Hacienda's affordable housing communities, enjoy the full support of a vast array of culturally appropriate services tailored to their needs, including inter-generational education for children and adults; healthy lifestyles awareness classes; civic engagement and recreation. The community center at Plaza Los Robles has been accredited for adult education by the National Institute of Adult Education of the Mexican government. Currently, Plaza Los Robles is fully occupied, allowing 24 families earning just 30% to 50% of family median income to call Plaza Los Robles their home.

Should you have any questions please contact me at vmerced@haciendacdc.org or (503) 595-2111.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Victor Merced
Executive Director

Learn more about our work: <http://www.haciendacdc.org/>