



Proven Partners • Thriving Communities • Lasting Value

To: Members of the Human Services and Housing Committee

RE: In support of HB 2629

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer and members of the Committee:

Oregon ON joins the Housing Alliance and other advocates in support of HB 2629. While this bill won't solve the underlying problem of affordable housing preservation and our statewide shortfall of affordable homes, it is a common-sense policy tool that will help reduce displacement, will mitigate harm to low-income residents, and will help jurisdictions and housing providers focused on preservation time to work with USDA Rural Development to try to preserve the property.

The bill would require owners of USDA Rural Development properties financed through the Rural Rental Housing and Farm Labor Housing programs to provide one year notice of mortgage maturity to residents, state and local government and local public housing agencies.

This bill will provide several important, basic protections to low income renters. At the same time, it does not create an unfair burden on owners, since once an owner provides the notice required under HB 2629, they have no further obligation.

In Oregon there are approximately 200 Rural Development properties located in small rural communities providing 6,300 affordable apartments to working families, seniors and people with disabilities. Currently there is no law requiring owners to provide notice to residents about the loss of Rental Assistance and other rent subsidies that occurs when an RD loan pays off. This lack of notice exposes low-income residents to significant rent increases with little warning and could place many residents in rural communities at risk of displacement or homelessness.

The notice to residents required under HB 2629 would provide residents a reasonable amount of time to try to find a new place to call home. It will also provide the state, local jurisdictions, and housing providers time to work together to preserve the property as affordable housing.

We urge you to support HB 2629. Thank you very much for your consideration, and always for your service to Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'John Miller'.

John Miller
Executive Director