



## Community And Shelter Assistance Corp.

20508 SW Roy Rogers Road Suite 155 Sherwood, OR 97140

Phone: (503) 537-0319

[www.casaoforegon.org](http://www.casaoforegon.org)

March 11, 2015

To: Chair Keny-Guyer and members of the Human Services and Housing Committee

From: Peter Hainley, Executive Director of CASA of Oregon

RE: HB 2629

For 27 years, CASA has worked in rural communities to ensure that farmworkers and other low income populations have access to safe, decent and affordable housing.

Much of the housing built in rural areas is developed using loans and grants from the USDA Rural Housing Service (RHS). RHS's multi-family housing programs usually include rental assistance subsidies ensuring that tenants don't pay more than 30% of their income towards their rent. Once the mortgage matures, the rental assistance goes away.

We are working with the Klamath Housing Authority to try and preserve the Merrill Apartments in Merrill Oregon which has a maturing mortgage. The residents in this project are typical of those residing in USDA-financed apartments; very low income (average annual income \$9,500), senior or disabled. If the mortgage matures on this project, tenants will no longer receive rent subsidy which means nearly all of their income will be go towards paying rent and utilities.

While HB 2629 will not help preserve the units at Merrill or other USDA properties with maturing mortgages, it will help prepare residents for the shock that is to come, giving them time to try and figure out alternative living arrangements.

HB 2629 will alleviate some of the pain soon to be inflicted on many rural renters. It is a small measure to help protect some of Oregon's rural poor. I urge you to pass this bill.



EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY