



# Society of St. Vincent De Paul

ROGUE VALLEY COUNCIL  
OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE  
P.O. BOX 215  
ASHLAND, OREGON 97520

3/18/2015

Beth Hill, President, OLM Conference

Bill Jennett  
Jackson County Fuel Committee  
995 Siskiyou Blvd  
Ashland, OR 97520

**Dear Bill:**

This is to affirm our support for your efforts to support Oregon House Bill 2599 with appropriate amendments.

The Conference of St. Vincent de Paul at Our Lady of the Mountain Catholic church has been providing assistance to needy residents of Ashland, Talent, and surrounding areas for many years. We assist those in poverty and in emergency financial situations.

We have no office but visit residents in their homes if possible. We assist with rent, transportation, food, clothing, furniture, and medications. We also help pay electric, water and gas bills when people are threatened with having them cut off. Our main goals however have always been to prevent homelessness by keeping families from being evicted and help people without housing to afford it.

In recent years, however, we have increasingly been asked for help in keeping utilities from being cut off. For the last three years our expenditures for utility help have continually increased and now exceed all other help we provide even rental assistance.

This has had a direct impact on our ability to fight homelessness. Money being donated by sympathetic citizens to feed, clothe, and shelter the poor now goes directly to utility providers and their owners. Unless the situation improves less will go to the poor and more to the owners. HB 2599 is a small step in the right direction.

If utility prices keep rising faster than the rate of inflation it is not outlandish to project Oregon becoming a third world society where children do their homework by candle light; haul water from the nearest creek to homes heated by burning up our timber resources.

Thank you,

Beth Hill, President, OLM Conference