

To the committee,

At this time, in the midst of the Covid-19 health emergency, I am writing in support of measures taken to provide assistance to tenants of rental housing.

My husband and I are owners of a small number of multifamily buildings in Multnomah County. We have owned and maintained these properties for many years, and have always provided our tenants with well-maintained, frequently upgraded housing. We support efforts to maintain stability in housing. We have already pledged no increases in rent rates during the pandemic, and support the non-eviction measures taken to help tenants as we all navigate an uncertain future.

This week, an article by Jordan Weissman was published by [Slate.com](https://www.slate.com), entitled “Bail Out Everyone.” At first glance this seems silly, but Weissman makes the point that our economy, in all its facets, is a vast and interconnected network. Restaurant workers who are laid off due to enforced closure will have nowhere to return to work if restauranteurs lose leases as they are unable to make rent payments when they are forced to shut down. Just as tenants need help with rent assistance, so too do property owners need help to ensure that they will not lose their buildings and ability to return to some kind of positive cash flow, and will not be forced into foreclosure as we ensure that our tenants are not displaced.

In housing, tenants are one part of the equation. They need reassurance that they will not be dislocated, and time to find their bearings and understand what kind(s) of rent relief might be available to them, and they need housing owners to understand their concerns and work with them. Another part of the equation is people like my husband and myself, who have no retirement income to speak of other than the income from housing we have purchased, improved, and maintained. Just as we want to help our tenants, we need some relief as well—especially from the very complicated and difficult new ordinances that could make it impossible for us to fill current or future vacancies at our properties. Should our tenants be unable to pay their rents, and if we practice forbearance, will we lose our ability to pay our mortgages? Will we be able to make repairs, and to maintain our properties? Will we be required to implement new rental screening criteria without ever having training sessions on those new criteria, which are both complicated and onerous to owners in the best of times?

At a time when there’s consensus about the need to put the community above oneself, it will be important to remember that the community includes everyone, not only one segment of the population. I hope that as you work to support tenants of rental housing, you will also work to support the entire community involved in rental housing—tenants, owners, and management companies who rely on payment by owners to support paid staff and carry out the administrative, and often the maintenance, of housing units. We all need consideration in these uncharted, ominous, and frightening times.

Thanks for your help and consideration,
Roberta Lampert

Roberta Lampert
503-730-0074