

Oregon State Capitol

900 Court Street NE

Salem, OR 97301

**RE:** Coronavirus Rent Relief Package

Dear Co-Chairs Roblan, Holvey, and members of Joint Special Committee on Coronavirus Response:

As a local property manager, I take great pride in providing housing to hundreds in my local community. During this crisis, my number one priority is to offer a workable solution for tenants, landlords, and property managers. Thank you for taking the time to read my comments below.

Our family has owned and operated Elite Property Management in Corvallis, Oregon since 2000. At Elite Property Management we provide housing and management services for residents in Corvallis, Philomath, Albany, Lebanon, Newport, Monroe, Alsea, Blodgett, and Jefferson. At this time, we are managing over 300 rental units and employ 5 office staff and work with local contractors who will rely on our business to keep them and their employees financially secure during this crisis.

There is no doubt that rent relief for property managers and tenants will become necessary in the coming weeks because of the coronavirus pandemic. Today, Governor Kate Brown issued an executive order temporarily halting residential evictions for nonpayment of rent. This order will remain in effect for 90 days. I by no means intend to put anyone on the streets during these difficult times. This new executive order will only increase the number of tenants not paying rent and only adds to the importance of creating some kind of rent relief package in the coming days.

I would stress by asking that you encourage tenants to do all they can do to continue to pay their rent on time. Just because landlords will not be able to file evictions in court does not mean that the tenants will not be incurring a past due balance to be paid at a later time.

Rent payment is the largest source of income for property management companies. With that being said a portion of each rent payment is typically used in providing an essential service to

tenants. Reoccurring monthly bills need to be paid in order for the tenant to have a habitable place to live. Examples of these services are water/sewer, trash service, landscaping, and maintenance. If there is no rental income, we will not be able to provide these important services for our tenants. It is everyone's goal to keep tenants housed and have properties that are fully functional and kept in a habitable condition. Making rent payments directly to the property manager will ensure that these costs are covered, ensuring tenants continue to live in a safe and healthy environment.

We currently work with multiple rental assistance programs in the State of Oregon (Section 8, CSC, DHS and other non-profit agencies). Every single one of these agencies pay rental assistance directly to us on behalf of the tenant. This is done to help ensure the tenant does not lose their housing due to non-payment of rent. This rent relief package being considered before you will only be successful and effective if the rent payments are made directly to the landlord.

Further, by directing payment to the property management company, it ultimately gets taxed as income to the property owner, not the tenant. If rental assistance goes directly to the tenant, the tenant will be taxed for receiving additional income. That is not helpful to any of the parties involved and hurts tenants who are already stretched thin during this crisis.

Paying property management companies / landlords directly is the tried and true way to ensure people stay housed. Section 8 housing is just one example how this type of program can and has been successful in providing safe and habitable housing for tenants when they are in a time of need. I would greatly appreciate it if you consider a solution that is beneficial for both the landlord and the tenant in this time of crisis.

Thank you for your time,

**Patricia Fawver**

Property Manager

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