

Senator Riley –

I would add my voice to many who are asking the committee to stop movement of SB 621 in the legislative process. I am a coastal resident of Waldport and observe the changes in our communities that have indeed reached crisis proportions.

Airbnb began with two young men providing air mattresses for a nominal fee to out of town participants to a conference in San Francisco, the benefit being their guests could afford the accommodation and the apartment residents could pay their rent for the month. Many who host rental space do so from their own homes or apartments, sharing a spare room and other amenities, having a dedicated guest suite on site, or even a “mother-in-law” garage space remodeled to host guests. Many find this cash flow very helpful when on fixed income or when employment slumps. In this format which is markedly different from renting houses to groups, the host and guest engage in mutual trust building and relationship, are enriched not only by a room rental fee but also learning about people from all over the globe who choose to participate in this process. In this format the host takes responsibility to screen renters’ requests, establishes ground rules for safety and good behavior, and ensures that those are followed. I believe Airbnb was truer to its founding principles without the more recent trend of investors running a whole chain of houses for rent as vacation rentals without host over-site. I contrast the scale and process of renting to transient visitors with the observation that not all rentals are causing harm, but rather are building trust and community, turning “tourists” into their guests. Hosts often assist them to find and appreciate the local beauties of where each of us live, providing enriching experiences or local foods, supporting local businesses and facilitating access to care when car or health emergencies arise!

Many citizens have given testimony of community impacts and negative experiences in neighborhoods and some communities are outlining the benefits of local ordinances reached through community input and finding their own solutions to impacts of unbridled rental consumerism. I assert the constitutional right of local self-government applies here along with common sense that legislating a single rule for all communities in Oregon does nothing to serve the people and our communities. Trust the wisdom of local governing bodies and citizen engagement to take appropriate action for the best interests of local people, local businesses, and the environment.

Thank you.

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