

Hello and good morning!

My name is Randall Olsen and I manage the Energy Conservation Program for Community Action Organization in Washington County. I've been working in the low-income Weatherization Assistance Program for over 27 years.

Every low-income family should have the opportunity to live in an energy efficient, safe and healthy home. Studies show that housing has a considerable impact on occupant's health and life chances. House Bill 2842 can improve indoor air quality through the installation of adequate mechanical ventilation to exhaust out or reduce the concentration levels of indoor pollutants such as particulate matter 2.5, carbon monoxide, moisture, and volatile organic compounds or VOCs.

Energy efficient homes that are cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter are healthier, especially for seniors and children. Studies have documented that occupants of well insulated homes with good indoor air quality have fewer visits to doctors and hospitals, and have a lower mortality rate.

There is an affordable housing crisis in Oregon. This bill can help preserve and maintain existing affordable low-income housing units. There are hundreds of manufactured homes built in the 1980's and 1990's that are in desperate need of roof replacements. Drive through any mobile home park and you will see homes with tarps on their roofs. If these roofs can be replaced, the structure's life can be extended for many years. If not, roof leaks create expensive structural problems, decay and mold.

House Bill 2842 will benefit the community in many ways: By stimulating local economies, creating jobs, and stabilizing neighborhoods. Maximizing the energy efficiency of residences reduces both the winter and summer peak demands, boosting the resiliency of the grid. In the event of a disaster, a well insulated home allows families to shelter in place longer. This bill will also help mitigate climate change by reducing energy usage and the burning of fossil fuels.

Community Action Agencies deliver the free Low Income Weatherization Assistance Program throughout Oregon. These agencies recognize the tremendous need for the Healthy Homes Program and are prepared to begin delivering services immediately.

Weatherization is the process of reducing low-income families' energy burdens while making their homes more durable, healthier, safer, more comfortable and energy efficient, which dovetails nicely with Healthy Homes Program's goals. But weatherization funds are limited regarding how much that can be spent on health and safety measures. Sadly, we have to deny many repairs.

Community Action Agencies utilize the most advanced diagnostic technologies and testing protocols available in the housing industry. Staff are highly trained and possess numerous certifications including Healthy Homes Evaluator, EPA Asbestos Inspector, EPA Lead Safety for

Renovation, Repair and Painting, DOE Mold and Moisture, Building Analyst and Quality Control Inspector certifications.

Community Action Agencies also have years of experience successfully serving low income households, and administering grant funds while complying with all state and federal laws, rules and regulations.

Hubert Humphrey once said, “The test of a society is how it treats those at the dawn of life - the children; those who are at the twilight of life - the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life - the sick, the needy and those with disabilities.” House Bill 2842 will provide critical resources for these low-income households in Oregon.

Lastly, I would like to share these comments from a single mother of three children after her home was made healthier and more energy efficient.

“I’ve had the house for eight years and this was the first year that my kids have had only one cold- JUST ONE. Almost every year before there were two or three months of steady sickness in the house and the house was never warm or comfortable. It’s been amazing to have a warm house when I wake up. These upgrades have changed our lives!”

We look forward to working together with the Oregon Health Authority to make low-income housing healthier, safer, more durable and energy efficient.

We support passage of House Bill 2842.

Thank you for listening.

Randall Olsen
Community Action
Energy Conservation Program Manager
(503) 693-3258