

Submitter: Dana Friend
On Behalf Of: Princeton Property Management
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Measure: SB799

Chair Jama, members of the committee, for the record my name is Dana Friend. I am the Project Manager for Princeton Property Management. We have been representing independent property owners since 1984. I have personally been in the housing industry for over 17 years.

On behalf of myself and our organization we would like to go on the record in opposition of SB 799. Our largest concern with the bill, as it is written, is the proposal to reimplement the pandemic era 60-day "Safe Harbor" waiting period.

Throughout the pandemic, I personally oversaw hundreds of applications for not only the Oregon Emergency Rental Assistance Program, but other such programs for emergency rental assistance. I experienced first-hand the failures in these programs when it came to timely and accurate payments. We experienced copious errors, payments were issued to incorrect properties, for incorrect amounts, for incorrect residents, etcetera.

These errors led to our owners waiting not only 60 days under the Safe Harbor protections, but much longer as payments that *were* approved and received often had to be returned while we waited for corrections to be made and payments to be reissued. All the while allowing residents to fall further behind.

We've seen a significant lack in communication between agencies and housing providers. Residents were able to simply provide a screenshot of an application for assistance. Nowhere in the application process were we kept in the loop to be updated when applications were cancelled or denied.

Lastly, a large failure with these programs were when residents were paid thousands of dollars in assistance directly. While some forwarded these payments to cover their back balances, others moved and our owners still have not been made whole.

As housing providers, we have continued to do our part to assist with the housing crisis. However, placing this burden again solely on the landlord to subsidize housing while the state's agencies take their time to process applications is counterproductive to solving houselessness in Oregon. It is *not* our goal to displace residents from their homes. However, we cannot continue to be considered an untapped source of funding.

We've had clients sell their properties and invest in other states. As independent property owners, they simply cannot afford to wait for rent while mortgages are due. They cannot make necessary property improvements with the cost of inflation. They cannot absorb the costs of utility expenses and property taxes that are at an all-time high.

I would encourage the committee to reconsider this bill and focus on proactive, systemic improvements that would provide true permanent solutions to housing instability. Solutions like funding permanent rental assistance programs so residents have ongoing stability instead of waiting for emergency funding. In addition to policies that will attract developers and small independent housing providers back to Oregon.

I very much thank you for your consideration and allowing me to speak on this issue.