

Submitter: Cynthia Dettman

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB2983

Good morning. My name is Cynthia Dettman. I'm the President of the Wingspread Mobile Home Park Resident Association in Ashland, Or. When I moved into Wingspread as an older woman on a fixed income, I had no idea what to expect. What I found was a lively, loving community of 116 households with smart, capable people who take care of each other. We collaborate in old-fashioned ways as people often did in the 1940s and 50s. We take disabled neighbors to the doctor and to the store. Some of us help with repairs on aging homes. Others volunteer on committees to ensure that our park is safe and attractive. We take care of the ponds and the trees on the land we rent. We are careful to protect the wildlife. Many of us have lived here for decades. In the summer we have potlucks and parades. Families have raised children here, and some of us are living in homes left to us by our parent and grandparents.

However, our lives are threatened by the economic reality of our situation. Our park was built in the 1960s and has very aging infrastructure. It's been owned by the same family for more than 60 years. The founder has died and his son, a real estate attorney, now runs from the park from California. Like many mobile home parks, we have a largely elderly population, including many single woman. Some of us are disabled and most live on fixed incomes. We are a captive group of tenants who are very vulnerable to rent increases, especially now with inflation. Our monthly rent increases almost every year. This year our lot rent went from \$600 to \$640, which is a lot for folks on a fixed income.

Our park's operations are handled by a very large management company that has a poor history of promptly and effectively responding to our needs. The aging water system keeps breaking and leaking. Last year we had a leak going on for months while the company failed to diagnose and repair the problem. When a leak has to be repaired, all water is shut off because the owner has not been willing to install area or street shutoffs. We have large, old trees that need pruning or removal. During last month's major wind events, a large tree branch fell on an elderly neighbor's roof, just missing her as it plunged into her bathroom and tore the roof. One very disabled neighbor last year was almost evicted because he needed to trim some bushes and move his house number. The list goes on.

Southern Oregon is full of vulnerable tenants in mobile home parks. Here in Ashland, we have a very run-down park with tiny lots filled with Latino families who work hard in the local tourist industry. They pay an even higher rent than we do. These communities too need the option to come together and improve their own living

conditions.

We support this legislation to fund resident-owned cooperatives. We would much prefer to own our own land together as a cooperative and run our own neighborhood. We know the whole village would come together. People would take pride in their own homes. And as low-income people, we would build our own security and home values as well. We want these lands to leave the hands of private owners. We want parks access to funds where we could not only stabilize our monthly payments and repair infrastructure, but also better care for the land, the trees, the wildlife, and each other.