

March 20, 2023

FROM: Barbara Ruth Robbins
131 Little Ed Rd
Blairsville GA 30512

RE: SB 611

TO: 2023 Oregon Legislature

I am writing as the owner of two duplex rental properties in Eugene, which I have owned since 1993. Initially I managed my units personally. My current circumstance as an 80 YO widow caused me to relocate in 2018 to N Georgia, in order to be close to family. At that time I engaged a property manager (at a cost of 10% of gross rents) since I could no longer manage my units personally.

I rarely have a vacancy—all four families in my units have been tenants of mine for at least five years. During the period from March 2019 to mid-2022, my tenants' rents were stable—it was my decision that there would be no increases due to the pandemic and its effect on the economy. Do I need to mention that property taxes and property insurance did increase? Do I need to mention that repairs and general maintenance were both required?

I agree that there is a serious shortage of affordable family housing. But imposing rent controls will most likely make the current shortage even more severe because the large corporations who specialize in construction of new rental units will not build in a state with rent control. Without new construction the shortage of rentals will only increase because the need for rentals will increase.

In addition, the current pool of rental properties owned by small owners such as myself will gradually decrease for several reasons. For example, duplex units are ideal for families who want to have older parents close by without the stress and expense of parents living alone or in assisted living. And duplex units are being converted into AirBnB rentals at a rapid rate, which for owners is very financially advantageous but which pulls units out of the rental market. IMO this is the primary reason that the shortage of rental units continues to worsen. I have a personal commitment to provide reasonably priced housing, especially to younger families. Most owners will choose the higher income.

I hope that the Legislature will take the time to research the experiences in New York City and San Francisco, both before and after rent control was imposed.

Finally I would encourage the Legislature to consider a completely different approach: Housing that is developed, owned, and managed by the State of Oregon. If state-owned housing is outside your vision of how our free market operates, then consider that imposing rent control on private property is also not compatible with a free market. Rent control will never encourage development of additional units, and IMO ultimately will not result in additional units entering the rental market.

Thank you for your time reading my letter, and considering all the implications. I agree that there is a serious shortage of reasonably-priced rental units. My experience as owner tells me that rent control ultimately will only complicate the market and worsen the shortage of reasonably-priced rental units.

Sincerely,

Barbara Ruth Robbins

CC: Trusted Property Management, Eugene, OR