



TESTIMONY ON MANUFACTURED HOUSING LEGISLATION

**Submitted by Dolores Raymond, Member
Governor's Commission on Senior Services
March 2, 2007**

Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dolores Raymond, and I am a resident of Washington County. I am sorry that I am unable to testify in person, since affordable housing in general and manufactured housing in particular are such passionate interests of mine. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Governor's Commission on Senior Services.

The Governor's Commission on Seniors Services is committed to helping Oregon leaders plan now and invest now for our future. The Governor's Commission held a statewide series of community forums last year, to meet with Oregonians about the future challenges we face as our population continues to age. We spoke with more than 500 Oregonians in 20 cities, and heard that affordable housing was a major issue throughout the state. This was especially true in the rural areas, but was also a high priority among respondents from more populated communities as well, such as Washington and Clackamas Counties.

As you may know, the senior population is the fastest growing segment of the population in this state. By the year 2025, nearly one in five Oregonians will be over the age of 65. This demographic phenomenon puts an even greater demand on the state to support our citizens in finding affordable housing.

Unfortunately, recent trends in federal support for affordable housing, increased costs of housing, the profitability of new development, and local land use constraints make it more likely, rather than less, that affordable housing will continue to be a serious challenge for citizens of our state.

For example, in Lane County, the "severe housing cost burden" is 34 percent. This means that 34 percent of the residents spend more than 50% of their gross income on housing. In Deschutes County, that figure is 32 percent. In Washington and Clackamas Counties, that figure is 29 percent.

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Despite the good work we are doing in this state, most indicators inform us that residents will continue to spend a larger and larger portion of their household income on housing costs.

The Commission strongly supports the efforts of the Manufactured Housing Landlord/Tenant Coalition to support affordable housing initiatives in Oregon and support the rights of manufactured home owners. I have been involved with the efforts of this group for some time, and appreciate how representatives of the park owners and the manufactured home owners have conducted a civil dialogue for mutual benefit.

Surely, the State of Oregon has a vested interest in providing support to tenants of manufactured home parks to be able to stay in either their manufactured home or, if displaced, to find another affordable housing solution. The approximate cost for a Medicaid –eligible resident in a nursing home is \$5200 per month. Other types of facility care paid by Medicaid range from about \$700 to \$2,000 per month.

On the one hand, tax credits may be a lower-cost alternative than paying for the State's share of Medicaid costs in facility care for those without another place to go. However, we feel strongly that *the legislature must strike an appropriate balance* in apportioning the cost burden and the responsibility between the public at large, and park owners and developers whose actions result in displacement.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony, and for your work to develop an appropriate balance of responsibility for the costs associated with displacement from manufactured housing parks.