

Date 03/18/24

Dear Senator Port and The Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to submit this brief note in bringing your attention to the W-ERA, work group on emergency rental assistance.

Please pass SENATE FILE #4704, as the need remains dire and always will be.

I have needed all three ERA programs. This arose in 2015, 2018 and 2023 respectively.

I have been displaced as a senior citizen and receiving these programs allowed me to avoid shelter and street homelessness. This application process is an arduous and difficult process at best. It's always very challenging and we truly need to simplify these programs.

Without being a former foster care provider and knowing the value of persistence and cordiality in self advocacy; I would have been put homeless every single time these NOAH properties were sold.

Since age 65 I never have moved at the time and place of my own choosing. I have moved three times through these three displacements and being older now and on a fixed low income, the need for emergency help in funding has arisen. Please don't misunderstand. I also wiped out any savings all three times that I had possibly held as well as needing these assisting funds.

EACH TIME THIS INDUSTRY DISPLACEMENT OCCURS IT IS A HOUSING EMERGENCY.

I am very grateful for EA, emergency assistance, ERA, emergency rental assistance and FHPAP, family homelessness prevention and assistance programming. This need was absolutely through no fault of my own.

This occurs because in this industry housing providers continually escalate rents and fail to participate in very reliable programs. This is a great harm to people who live at the edge of poverty.

In fact these wonderful assistance programs augment the lucrative housing rehabilitation and renovation industry.

Perhaps there should be a much greater requirement upon these gentlemen and ladies, to mitigate the harm their investments, upscaling and repositioning of older mid-century properties bring. Perhaps they should be funding emergency rental assistance since they are the root cause of it. If we do not create ongoing STATE resources for emergency rental assistance perhaps those who put us in the need of it should be required to add that to their cost of doing business.

With all due respect,

Linda Soderstrom

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