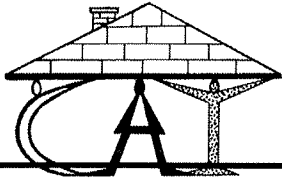


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COMMUNITY ALLIANCE OF TENANTS

2710 NE 14th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97212

April 21, 2010

Dear Mayor and Commissioners;

My name is Elisa Aguilera. I live in the Montavilla neighborhood. I am one of the Co-directors for the Community Alliance of Tenants. I am here today providing testimony on behalf of CAT.

We want to thank you for council's past support for safe housing and affordable housing programs. CAT and many other groups have been able to leverage the city's support to rehab affordable housing buildings, provided information and referral to thousands looking for housing or housing assistance, have helped make homeowner attainable for more Portlanders, and have increased the stock of affordable housing units. Portland City Council's support has been essential to the housing community.

We are also encouraged by the substantial work that has taken place at the Neighborhood Inspections Program over the last two years to improve enforcement strategies within the constraints of existing code. However, meaningfully addressing the problem of substandard housing will require significant changes to the status quo and funding to support those changes- changes that will take further action by this Council.

Many tenants continue to struggle with their housing needs, especial during this recession. There are still too many low-income renters that are paying more than 50%, and 70% of their income in rent. The need for rent assistance programs and more affordable housing continues to be significant. On our hotline, and through our outreach program we are hearing from more and more families that are doubling up or even tripling up because that is the only way they can afford a home. Low-income people are feeling the pinch from the recession in very difficult ways. As there continues to be a shortage of affordable housing, the private market has in some ways filled the

We recognize that the majority of landlords in our City treat their responsibilities with diligence and properties with care. Unfortunately, our experience and the existing data suggest that a significant minority do not. The impact is devastating and borne by the most vulnerable in our City. With the cut programs and services from the Neighborhood Inspections program it has become drastically difficult for renters to access the program in a timely manner. We have taken steps back in our ability to provide support to renters living in hazards and inhabitable conditions. Even during this difficult financial time, safe housing needs to be prioritized. If the private market is filling the affordable housing gap, we need to make sure people are safe in that housing. We look forward to the City improving its systems and tools for holding landlords accountable in those instances where landlords willfully fail to meet their basic responsibilities.

This Council has shown its willingness to break new ground when necessary, and it is much appreciated. We look forward to your continued engagement on this issue and urge you to continue to fund and support safe and affordable housing programs and services provided by the Neighborhood Inspections Program and the Housing Bureau as a step towards ensuring that each of our neighbors has a safe place to call home.

Sincerely,
Elisa Aguilera
Co- Director

Parsons, Susan

From: Elisa Aguilera [elisa@oregoncat.org]
Sent: Thursday, April 01, 2010 4:41 PM
To: Parsons, Susan
Subject: communications time slot for 4/21

Mrs. Parsons,

I would like to sign up for a time certain spot on the 4/21 council hearing. My name is Elisa Aguilera, from the Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT). My contact is elisa@oregoncat.org. I would like to address council about the community impact of substandard housing and need the need to prioritize safe housing and affordable housing. CAT works to support low income renters having difficulty in their tenancy. CAT's members and safe housing allies want to emphasize the need for an accessible and effective property inspections program. Due to the lack of affordable housing options in the city and the expense of moving, safe, stable and affordable housing is often out of reach for too many renters.

thank you
elisa

Elisa Aguilera
Co-Director
Community Alliance of Tenants
www.oregoncat.org
elisa@oregoncat.org

Support renters' rights in Oregon now at www.oregoncat.org.

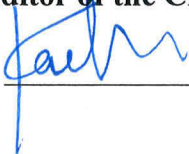
Request of Elisa Aguilera, Community Alliance of Tenants to address Council regarding the impact of substandard housing and the need to prioritize safe and affordable housing (Communication)

APR 21 2010

PLACED ON FILE

Filed APR 16 2010

LaVonne Griffin-Valade
Auditor of the City of Portland

By 

COMMISSIONERS VOTED AS FOLLOWS:		
	YEAS	NAYS
1. Fritz		
2. Fish		
3. Saltzman		
4. Leonard		
Adams		