

Housing director calls for stronger landlord-tenant bill

SALEM (Special) — A University student Friday urged the House Local Government and Urban Affairs Committee to strengthen SB 159, a bill designed to overhaul landlord-tenant laws, while a Portland realtor asked the committee to remove several sections of the bill during the second House hearing on the measure.

The bill recently passed the Senate after undergoing sub-

By NAN HENDERSON
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stantial amendment in the Senate Local Government and Urban Affairs Committee.

ASUO Housing Director Frank Wall told the House committee that a section of the bill deleted in Senate consideration should be reinstated. The section would allow tenants to make minor repairs in rental units and deduct the cost from their rent.

Wall, a third-year law student, said the bill now represents a "watered-down compromise" of the original measure introduced at the beginning of the legislative session. He said that in its weakened form it does not go far enough in correcting the problems tenants currently face. And Wall said that his work in the University Housing Office has made him very aware of those

problems since most students are renters.

"Students represent what must be the largest low-income group in the city," Wall said.

"Typically, they pay the most rent for the smallest, dirtiest, noisiest and least desirable housing. They rent from the most marginal and speculative landlords and have the most egregious landlord and tenant problems," he said.

Wall told the committee that these problems cause students to develop "deep and bitter" feelings toward landlords and that passage of the bill with the "repair and deduct" section reinstated would "go a long way toward removing the dismal air of bad faith and cynicism" which now surrounds the rental of urban housing.

Portland Realtor Sidney Bluestone told the committee that Wall and other tenant representatives are painting a picture of landlords as wearing long black capes, little mustaches and having small beady eyes. But, Bluestone said, few landlords are the stereotype movie villains that tenants portray them to be.

Bluestone said that it is evident that the bill was designed to "insure that no landlord in the state of Oregon will ever treat a tenant with contempt." But he said while the bill may destroy the villain, "it creates a new

monster," a law that landlords will not be able to follow "without undue costs."

Bluestone said, "I am not advocating the destruction of SB 159. None of us object to an equal bill. But this bill removes virtually all protection landlords have against unscrupulous tenants."

He observed that most tenants don't realize that landlords "would rather pay \$30 to keep a tenant happy than to have him move out which is often more expensive." Bluestone said that a provision in the bill requiring landlords to make needed repairs within 14 days after notification is unworkable. "Sometimes we have to order parts from the east and that takes months," he pointed out.

Bluestone also asked the committee to remove sections which allow a landlord's breach of contract (failure to provide "habitable" rentals as outlined in the bill) to be used as a defense by tenants in non-payment of rent court cases and prohibit the presently legal "landlord's lien" (locking tenants out and selling their property for failure to pay rent on time).

He said the sections should be removed from the bill to discourage tenants who try to "avoid their obligations."

Another hearing on the bill is scheduled for Wednesday.

Bonneville Power Director predicts power shortages

By JEANIE WAKELAND
Of the Emerald

Bonneville Power Administration Director Don Hodell predicted Oregonians may face power shortages until the winter of 1979-80 or longer if additional power plants aren't built.

Speaking to the Rubicon Society Friday, Hodell said that while supplies for next winter may be enough, "a drop of one degree in the temperatures expected next winter could cause a power shortage."

He told his audience that Oregonians may also face a shortage of 1.7 million kilowatts in 1974-75 and 1 million kilowatts in 1975-76.

Hodell believes the only way to end the projected shortage is to build more plants. "The risk of being wrong in over-building is much less of a problem than the risk of under-building, because the shortage will come in the dead of winter when it's five degrees below zero," he said.

The BPA director blamed the shortages on delays in construction and increased demand. He also placed some of the blame on Eugene voters.

"We had a Eugene plant coming into the system in 1976," he said. "That was part of the plan. But it was put under a moratorium by the people of the city of Eugene."

He praised the Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) for their opposition to the power plant moratorium, and said the recent court action against EWEB "has had a negative impact on other boards."

EWEB members were recently ordered by an Oregon Appeals Court to repay \$12,000 out of their own pockets, replacing public funds used to buy

advertising against the moratorium issue on the ballot last fall.

While he supports energy conservation plans, he doesn't believe turning off a light or turning down the heat can compensate for the Northwest's growth rate of seven per cent per year. "If the Northwest used half of the power they use now, in ten years we'd be back to using as much power as we're using now," he said.

Hodell also thinks that increasing the costs of power to the consumer would have little effect in cutting consumption. "We can make the rates so high that people will turn off lights, but again, that won't make much difference."

Hodell hinted that he would like to reverse the order in which power is cut off. Presently industry is cut off first, followed by commercial buildings, institutions, and lastly residential consumers. Calling the residential consumer the "sacred cow of the power industry," he noted that power cuts to the aluminum plants this spring has put 350 to 400 people out of work, and even more from the railroads.

"Does it make sense to keep a guy's lights on when he doesn't have a job to pay his light bill?" he asked.

Hodell was questioned by the members of the Eugene Future Power Committee on the Joint Operating Agencies bill now before the legislature. Hodell favors the bill, saying that the bill would enable co-ops to band together.

"Co-ops obviously have a great reluctance to go through the agony the Eugene Water and Electric Board did in trying to responsibly face up to its power needs," Hodell said.

Harmful drug sought

A substance being sold as MDA, a hallucinogenic drug, is suspected of having harmful and possibly fatal effects, according to the Drug Information Center (DIC). The drug, called PMA, has been noted in cities on the East Coast although no samples have yet come into the hands of drug analysis laboratories or law enforcement agencies.

The drug, like MDA, is reportedly sold as a white powder, contained in cellophane or tin foil. Among the symptoms reported for those having reportedly taken the drugs are hypertension, agitation, a very high temperature and convulsions.

Mark Miller, director of the DIC, said the information was received through Dr. Bing Hart of the Haight-Ashbury Clinic in San Francisco. Miller is asking persons with what they think to be MDA to call the DIC and use its anonymous drug-testing service, which is made available through Pharm-Chem laboratories in California.

The DIC's number is 686-5411.

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