

Against the backdrop of a city with exorbitant rent and cost of living prices, local city governments are using public funds to police people trying to survive outside, even harassing housed neighbors that let others camp on their property.

Anyone who lives or commutes on Alder street in Eugene may have noticed that over the summer a structure went up in the front yard of one of the large co-op houses. Many people would pass through and congregate on the porch at all hours of the day and night. People and dogs would come and go, and sometimes stay. And those who noticed the structures go up may have also noticed that the yard was recently and abruptly cleared. On February 4th the City of Eugene delivered an "Order to Abate Nuisance" letter to Student Cooperative Association Campbell Club house. For months, the porch and front yard had been acting as a sort of third space for a number of people who would spend time there. In the letter from the city, the residents of the Campbell Club were instructed to clear everyone and their "junk" from their front yard. It cited code violations 6.010: Garbage and Debris, 6.015: Rodent Harborage, 6.800: Junk, and 8.005: Unauthorized Camping. The property owners were instructed to "abate the nuisance or a minimum of one of the following actions will occur." As pictured, the threats are as follows:

- The City of Eugene may enter the property and take whatever action is necessary to abate the nuisance. The costs of doing this, including administrative overhead, will be charged against the Owner/Responsible Party, and the person(s) in charge of the property
- You may be prosecuted in the City of Eugene Municipal Court for maintaining a nuisance. The city will seek a fine.
- The City may seek a court order directing you to abate the nuisance, under which continued failure to abate

could place Owner/Responsible Party duties and obligations

This is just one example of a tactic that has been used by the Eugene city government for years. The host of one of the free Eugene Community Fridges –the only 24/7 resource in Eugene to access free food– also has visitors throughout the day and night to access resources and became a target for city citations as a result. The owner of the Friendly Street house received a letter ordering them to remove the fridge because it was too close to the sidewalk, and also a hazard to children, who presumably could find themselves stuck inside. The city of Eugene also employed the tactic of threatening exorbitant fines to coerce a company to remove unhoused residents on the Union Pacific Railroad, resulting in mass demolition of people's long-standing structures. In this case, the demo-ing of camps and homes was followed by intense policing of the people who had to leave their homes of 4+ years. People were followed daily to any new place they attempted to bring their belongings, and many were given multiple fines and citations each day. This was reported on by the Eugene Stop the Sweeps.

In the third week of January of this year, one of the last long-standing encampments along the Union Pacific railroad tracks in West Eugene was demolished by the city and its police force. The community was made up of fixed structures built by the people living outside and, according to residents, had been there upwards of five years. Distinct from many of the homes and structures built and eventually demolished along the railroad tracks in that area in recent years, this group was not living on federal property, but was across the bordering line on private property. The residents had an amiable relationship with the property owners, and had built mutual trust over time. This sweep occurred during a twelve day stretch of below-freezing weather, despite city policy to pause sweeps during freezing conditions.

Unhoused residents of Eugene and Lane County have been sounding the alarm for years about the City's targeted campaigns to make their lives unlivable. This has happened through escalating tactics of camping bans, parking regulations, policing of public parks and spaces, confiscation of property and survival supplies, and, as seen through these

recent examples, even the harassment and penalizing of those who allow their neighbors to stay on their property. As per the City of Eugene's website, their number one priority of code compliance on property is unsanctioned camping. Keeping private property owners from allowing others to camp on their land is quite literally this city's top priority.

In the recent State of the City, county commissioner David Loveall cited an example in his speech of a neighbor allowing an unhoused person stay in his motor home while rebuilding his life. "My hat's off to the likes of my elderly neighbor who doesn't think government is the problem-solver," Loveall said. This statement rings sinisterly hollow when the government not only refuses to use our collective resources to provide safety and basic needs to those struggling to survive, but actively makes it difficult and costly for individuals to share their own resources . Local government and all its enforcers are demonstrating their intent to make unhoused people disappear through any means necessary. They are too polite to say, "Go and die", but they are more than willing to make life unlivable.