COMMUNITY ACTION ORGANIZATION

1001 SW Baseline St. ● Hillsboro, OR ● 97123 ● Main (503) 648-6646 ● Client Assistance (503) 648-0829 ● Fax (503) 648-4175

January 8, 1996

MEMO

To: Representative Chuck Carpenter

From: Jerralynn Ness

Subject: Legislative Interests of Community Action Organization

CAO in Washington County is part of a larger network of community action agencies in Oregon and around the country. In Oregon, we have formed a 501(c)4 non-profit association called the Community Action Directors of Oregon, or CADO. Our Executive Director is Carmel Bentley (503-316-0495) and our lobbyist is Jerry Bieberle (503-286-8807). We work collaboratively to address issues of poverty around our state.

CADO has established the following legislative priorities for the 1997 session:

    1. **State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP) and Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA)** - These programs are funded through the Oregon Housing and Community Services Division and operated in local communities around the state. Community action agencies serve as the lead agencies in each community and develop a collaborative responses to homelessness and the prevention of homelessness. CAO received $70,641 from SHAP and $172,051 this fiscal year which goes to support our community network of homeless and housing service providers. These funds are critical to Washington County having the ability to respond to local housing services needs and provide shelter to the homelessness. CADO is asking that funding for this program be restored to the 1991-93 level with an increase for inflation. See attached.

    2. **Affordable Housing Development** - CADO is asking that funding for the construction of affordable housing in Oregon be preserved and increased. See attached. As you are very aware, the lack of affordable housing continues to be a major problem in Washington County and one of the single greatest contributors to homelessness and family stress. While CAO will probably not be directly involved in the construction of housing, we will lend our technical assistance and support to other non-profit organizations and a our voice as an advocate for increasing the county's stock of affordable housing.

3. **Energy De-Regulation** - CADO is actively working to protect the interests of low income people as energy deregulation is being implemented in Oregon. See attached. CAO has, for many years, provided energy assistance, energy conservation education and weatherization services to low income households in Washington County. We are keenly aware of how essential energy is to all of us and yet how quickly it can become unaffordable to low income families and households on fixed incomes. We see deregulation as an opportunity to negotiate some protections for the most disadvantaged of our community.

4. **Community Service Option** - As welfare reform is implemented, many families are moving into employment but not out of poverty. They have lost their safety net and are turning to community action as a last resort. In order for community action to have the capacity to respond and help support families efforts to achieve self-sufficiency, CADO is seeking maximum flexibility in the use of state and federal funds. We believe there is a viable and meaningful role for community action in welfare reform and are seeking to negotiate service agreements with AFS.

In addition, CAO in Washington County received $467,468 this fiscal year from the **Oregon Department of Education to provide Head Start/State Pre-Kindergarten** services to about 80 additional three and four year old children. The continuation and expansion of this funding is one of our highest priorities for this legislative session. Head Start continues to enjoy bi-partisan support and with education appearing to be a high priority for funding, we are hoping for some good outcomes in this area.

Chuck, anything you can do to help support community action's legislative agenda would be greatly appreciated. Please let me know what additional information you need and how I can be of help. I wish you th very best, and thank you for your support.