

**UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
District of Oregon**

PRESS ROOM



October 9, 2009

St. Helen's Landlord Settles Fair Housing Act Case

Ronald A. Lucas and R.A. Lucas Developments, LLC agree to establish procedures to allow assistance animals for physically and mentally disabled tenants

Portland, Ore. – A settlement has been reached between the parties in a federal Fair Housing Act case against a St. Helen's landlord regarding assistance animals for persons with physical and mental disabilities. The parties have requested that Federal District Judge Michael W. Mosman approve the terms of the settlement. The parties have asked the court to approve a Consent Decree which references an additional confidential agreement between the tenant and the Lucases resolving all monetary and other relief agreed upon and disposing of all claims.

The civil action, filed by the U. S. Attorney's Office last September, alleged Ronald A. Lucas and R.A. Lucas Developments, LLC had violated Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended by the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 (known as the Fair Housing Act), by denying a mentally disabled tenant the ability to keep a companion dog in her unit. The Fair Housing Act protects persons from discrimination in the sale or rental of housing based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, or national origin. Under the Act, protections extend to persons with mental disabilities as well as physical disabilities.

R.A. Lucas Developments, LLC owns and operates a 15-unit apartment complex located in St. Helen's Oregon where the tenant resided. Ronald Lucas is the landlord of the property. While the resolution is not an admission of liability, the U.S. Attorney's Office will monitor Lucas' compliance with the agreement for three years. The case will not be dismissed against Lucas until the completion of the agreement's terms. Under the terms of the Consent Decree, Lucas must adopt and implement a written policy that permits disabled residents of their rental properties to keep assistance animals on the premises.

The case stemmed from a February 2008 complaint the tenant filed with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) against Lucas. HUD investigated the complaint and found probable cause that Mr. Lucas and R.A. Lucas Developments had violated the Fair Housing Act in their refusal to allow the tenant to have a small companion dog. The matter was referred to the U.S. Attorney, which commenced suit on behalf of the tenant. Legal Aid attorneys representing the tenant intervened in the federal civil action and sought monetary damages for the tenant's pain and suffering.

The case was handled by Assistant U. S. Attorneys Adrian Brown and Ron Silver. Information regarding the Fair Housing Act and other federal civil rights laws is located on the U.S. Attorney's website: <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/or/CivilRightsEnforcement.html>