



# A STRONG VOICE FOR OREGON'S WORKERS

TO: Chair Fahey  
Vice-Chairs Campos and Morgan  
Members of the House Committee on Housing

FR: Catie Theisen, OR AFL-CIO

RE: HB 2842 Support

February 11, 2021

The Oregon AFL-CIO represents 300,000 workers across Oregon and is a voice for all workers in the legislative process. As members of the Fair Shot For All Coalition we support this policy as part of the 2021 legislative agenda to make sure Oregonians have safe and healthy homes, especially as we continue to weather COVID-19 and experience increasingly dangerous wildfire seasons.

54% of Oregonians live in housing built before 1978 that is energy-inefficient and in need of repairs, weatherproofing, and upgrades for disaster resiliency. Families with low-incomes, families living in rural and tribal communities, and individuals that identify as Black, Indigenous, Latinx, or people of color are the most impacted due to decades of redlining and other discriminatory practices. Consequently, these communities are more likely to experience sick days and hospital visits caused by mold, cold weather, asthma flare-ups, and the inability to take refuge from bad outdoor air quality.

This costs Oregon taxpayers and furthers health and social inequities: In 2017, Oregonians spent \$28 million on asthma-related hospital visits. Thirty-two percent of children live in energy burdened homes and asthma is the leading cause of missed school days.

HB 2842 creates a Healthy Homes program at the Oregon Healthy Authority to provide grants to eligible entities that provide financial assistance to persons in low income households to repair and rehabilitate their residences and to landlords to repair and rehabilitate dwelling units. HB 2842 will: 1) help low-income families spend less money on heating and cooling; 2) help create local jobs in retrofitting and repairs; 3) provide a refuge from increasingly bad outdoor air quality; 4) reduce burden on hospitals and families by supporting better respiratory health; and 5) reduce the number of sick days for both adults and kids.

Please vote yes on HB 2842 to help build an Oregon where everyone lives in a home that is healthy and safe.