



Sheila Stiley, Board chair – NW Coastal Housing

February 3, 2022

Kymberly Horner – Vice-chair - Portland Community Reinvestment Inc.

Senate Committee on Housing and Development
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Rachael Duke, Secretary - Community Partners for Affordable Housing

Re: Support for SB 1536, Cooling Legislation

Trell Anderson, Treasurer –NW Housing Alternatives

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, Members of the Committee:

David Brandt, Housing Works

Housing Oregon is a membership-based statewide association of affordable housing development corporations committed to serving and supporting low-income Oregonians across the housing needs spectrum – from homeless to homeowner. Our members prioritize ensuring the health and safety of their residents. Due to climate change, Housing Oregon recognizes households of color are disproportionately affected by increasing extreme weather events.

Wakan Alferes Homes for Good

Ernesto Fonseca - Hacienda CDC

For these and other reasons listed below, Housing Oregon supports SB 1536-1. Most critically. The proposed legislation does a number of important things to provide clarity and strengthen the landlord/tenant relationship around cooling, without being burdensome to affordable housing providers.

Maria Elena Guerra - Farmworker Housing Development Corp

Garrick Harmel – Casa of Oregon

Nkenge Harmon Johnson – Urban League of Portland

Foster Martinez – St. Vincent de Paul Lane County

Kristy Rodriguez – Housing Authority of Malheur & Harney Counties

Since Housing Oregon views all proposed legislation with an equity lens, we recognize that the bill originated from a community-based grassroots collective of an all Indigenous, Black, and Brown community forum - formed right after the Summer 2021 deadly heatwave – the Heat Dome.

The initiative focused on two primary concerns: 1) many tenants did not have air conditioning (AC) because of landlord restrictions; and, 2) many tenants did not run their ACs because of fear of high utility bills. SB 1536 is designed to directly address both concerns so that there is increased access to cooling technologies for low-income Indigenous, Black, Brown, and other Communities of Color.

SB 1536 Cooling Legislation

Housing Oregon

Written Testimony

February 2, 2021

We applaud Verde's leadership on this issue. Verde worked tirelessly to build a broad base coalition of community organizations of color and engage with key stakeholders including affordable housing providers – the landlord community.

Housing Oregon's support has been conditioned on addressing several key issues of concern. All conditions appear to have been addressed in recent changes to the legislative concept. Those include:

- Allowing landlords to put rules in place regarding the cooling device installation;
- Making allowances regarding electrical capacity levels in some residential buildings;
- Allowing reasonable timing implementation with new construction;
- Allowing reasonable restrictions when a building's heating and cooling system is being renovated; and,
- Directs the Oregon Department of Energy to study the opportunities and barriers around ensuring that all affordable housing in Oregon has cooling access. This shifts the responsibility from affordable housing providers.

Whereas Housing Oregon appreciates that dedicated financial resources will be allocated for cooling projects, we underscore that additional long-term dedicated funding resources are needed to fully implement capital improvement retrofitting. This includes complementary administrative technical assistance and multiple agency coordination with OHCS. The language in the legislation takes this into account, as well as, the acknowledgment that it will take multiple years to fully implement the intent of this cooling legislation.

Housing Oregon asks that you vote yes for SB 1536 and approve the -1 amendments.
Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,
Stacie W. Sanders, Director of Policy and Advocacy
Housing Oregon