



Oregon
Environmental
Council



February 1, 2022

Senator Kayse Jama, Chair
Senate Interim Committee on Housing and Development

RE: SB 1536 - SUPPORT

Chair Jama and Committee Members,

The Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization that advances innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations. Climate Solutions is a regional non-profit working to accelerate clean energy solutions to the climate crisis. **On behalf of our thousands of members statewide, we urge you to support SB 1536, a bill that will protect the health and safety of Oregon families by removing barriers to adopt life-saving cooling technologies for renters, many of whom are low-income.**

As many as 100 people died across 28 Oregon cities during last summer's unprecedented climate-fueled heat wave. A majority of those people died alone in too-hot apartments because they did not have access to critical cooling technologies. It is unacceptable that landlords have the power to prevent renters from installing life-saving cooling technologies during deadly heat waves, particularly when low-income, BIPOC, and older Oregonians are most at risk. With extreme heat events becoming increasingly more common, we cannot wait to act to protect our communities and ensure all homes are resilient.

The Emergency Heat Relief for Renters bill (SB 1536) will help ensure we are taking care of our vulnerable populations as Oregon's weather becomes more extreme, by removing barriers for renters to install cooling technologies and requiring cool, livable spaces in new or recently renovated rental buildings. The bill will also provide funding for the Oregon Department of Human Services to help communities establish extreme weather shelters during high-heat events and to the Oregon Department of Energy to incentivize landlords to install efficient electric heat pumps.

Efficient electric heat pumps provide a variety of critical benefits to communities and the climate. They are effective at both heating and cooling homes, use less energy than traditional systems, and cost less to run than lower efficiency alternatives. They do not emit toxic air pollutants and they produce less climate pollution than other heating and cooling appliances on the market. These climate benefits will only improve as we continue to transition our electric system to 100% clean energy sources.

As climate change causes more extreme weather and changes what people need to stay safe and healthy, Oregonians must have access to life-saving cooling technology. By increasing access to electric heat pumps, SB 1536 will also help communities transition to cleaner, healthier living environments and cut climate-change causing pollution from buildings—Oregon's second biggest polluting sector.

We urge you to vote yes on SB 1536.

Sincerely,

Nora Apter
Climate Program Director
Oregon Environmental Council

Meredith Connolly
Oregon Director
Climate Solutions