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February 17, 2025

Representative Pam Marsh
Chair, House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
900 Court St NE, S-409
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 2967

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Anderson, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson,

Portland Tenants United, the Portland city-wide tenant union, writes to you today in support of HB 2967, which would ban rental application screening fees. Through organizing, direct action, coalition building, and civic engagement, Portland Tenants United fights to keep people in their homes, and to achieve dignity and security for all tenants.

HB 2967 is an opportunity for the Legislature to take bold action in helping Oregonians get into rental housing. Across the state there is a lack of affordable rental housing, something that the State has previously agreed is an emergency. Because of this, prospective tenants often have to apply to multiple properties before they are selected. There have been various efforts over the years to improve this system, such as Portland's FAIR ordinance and Eugene's \$10 screening fee cap, but they have been stymied by frivolous lawsuits by landlords backed by state pre-emptions.

Banning screening fees would not only benefit tenants, it would also benefit landlords as they would get more applicants to their properties. Right now, tenants who want to apply to multiple properties have to have enough money on hand to pay \$40-50 per application. It's simply out of reach for most tenants to put more than one or two applications in at any given time. And despite Oregon law requiring prompt returning of screening fees for unscreened applicants, we all know many landlords consider that more of a guideline, as there is no proactive enforcement of that law.

Banning screening fees would simplify a currently arduous and stressful process for both parties, leading to more Oregonians getting into housing and fewer units remaining vacant for months on end. Please move this bill out of committee and recommend its passing.

Sincerely,

Portland Tenants United Organizing Committee