



March 14, 2023

Representative Maxine Dexter
Chair, House Housing and Homelessness Committee
900 Court St NE, S-409
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Dexter, Vice-Chairs Gamba and Helfrich, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Timothy Morris and I serve as the Executive Director of the Springfield Eugene Tenant Association. SETA is a non-profit, public service organization that is dedicated to renters' rights and interests. We provide a free hotline as community support and we are often times a renter's first call when they receive an eviction notice. The demand for our services has skyrocketed from 2020 to present, where we presently resolve over 230 cases a month.

I am a resident of Eugene, which recently passed an ordinance to cap the application fees at \$10. Immediately upon the passing of this ordinance, tenants took a big sigh of relief. Unregulated application fees have been a significant barrier to tenants across the state of Oregon, with some fees as high as \$70 per person per adult. For communities like mine, with a vacancy rate well below the industry standard, housing is hard to come by, and seeking a new home will take multiple applications before you are approved. For especially low-income tenants, these fees are an extremely challenging barrier.

Cities like Eugene who take direct action in mitigating the homelessness crisis should be able to take direct action in preventing displacement. Unfortunately, there was a lawsuit regarding the \$10 application fee and the summary judgment stated that this ordinance is pre-empted by state law. Tenants on this hotline spoke about how consistent this \$10 and tenants could finally plan their finances to moving. We urge you to help us help ourselves.

Finally, we hope you recognize that while some localities have already attempted to take action on reducing the financial barriers of application fees, the State of Oregon is still in desperate need of standardization of the rental application process. Tenants are the first and most affected by our housing crisis. It is our hope that you consider going beyond just allowing localities to set their own fee cap and recognize that setting an industry standard will support those most vulnerable in our communities.



We ask you to pass HB 3237. If you'd like to connect with me, please reach out to tmorris@springfielddeugenantassociation.com or call me at 541-357-7331. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Timothy Morris
Executive Director
Springfield Eugene Tenant Association.