



# community alliance of tenants

Joint Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Co-Chair Beyer, Co-Chair Gomberg, and Members of the Committee

I write to you today on behalf of Community Alliance of Tenants in support of HB 5011, and the recommended budget for the Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) Department for the 2021-2023 biennium.

Formed in 1996, the Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT) is Oregon's only statewide, grassroots, tenant-controlled, tenant-rights organization. CAT educates, organizes and develops the leadership of low-income tenants.

The CAT mission is to educate and empower tenants to demand safe, stable and affordable rental homes. We believe that housing is the basis of a strong community. So, we bring tenants together to organize and collectively advocate for fair and equal protections in housing practices and policies. A safe and stable place to call home is a basic human need.

As you know, the State of Oregon has been hit hard by a number of crises in 2020. The ongoing pandemic and summer wildfires have devastated communities across the state and thrown families into economic distress. Prior to 2020, Oregon was already experiencing a housing crisis, and too many of our neighbors and community members were experiencing housing instability. In times of crisis like the ones that we experienced last year, and the one we are continuing to experience, a strong response to aid those who are most impacted is critical.

Throughout the years, CAT has worked with OHCS to implement and administer various programs including Tenant engagement, landlord/tenant education and advocacy and rent assistance. These programs have been critical to low-income tenants seeking to navigate a complex set of rules where they are disadvantaged by not have legal counsel. Tenants make up over 40% of all households in Oregon. While we serve any tenants in Oregon, we are not funded to effectively serve the entire tenant population. Our impact and reach are directly proportional to our funding from OHCS.

We support fully funding all of the work of OHCS but our focus is on those programs that serve low-income tenants. Namely, the Emergency Housing Account and State Homelessness Assistance Program: Included in the OHCS budget is \$40 million for the Emergency Housing Account (EHA) and State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP). The Housing Alliance and partners are advocating for \$50 million for these two programs to prevent and end



# community alliance of tenants

homelessness. Additionally, we seek full funding of the long-term foster youth rent assistance, Permanent Supportive Housing, \$250 million LIFT for Rental Housing and Homeownership, and Preservation of existing affordable housing.

We strongly support the passage of HB 5011 so that organizations like ours can continue to partner with OHCS and work to serve the people of Oregon.

Thank you for your time and for your service to the State of Oregon.

Sincerely,

*Kim McCarty*

Kim McCarty  
Executive Director  
Community Alliance of Tenants