

DATE: April 17, 2023
TO: Senate Committee on Housing & Development
FROM: Sammi Teo, Public Policy Advocate
RE: Support for HB 3042 to address shortage of affordable housing



Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, and members of the committee,

Oregon Food Bank's mission is "to eliminate hunger and its root causes... because no one should be hungry." We pursue this goal in two key ways: we foster community connections to help people access nutritious food today, and we advocate to change policies that drive hunger and poverty.

Food security and stable housing go hand-in-hand.

Lack of stable housing is a primary driver of food insecurity. Oregonians who are renters are six times more likely to experience hunger than Oregonians who are homeowners. In Oregon, more than 50% of renters do not have enough money left over after rent to pay for food, medicine, and other basic necessities. Over the course of many years working in communities that disproportionately face food insecurity, we have heard loud and clear that the lack of affordable housing in Oregon is a primary reason why more than one in eight kids in Oregon lives in a household that struggles to afford food. Too many Oregonians are forced to choose between feeding their families or losing everything to eviction. It's time to do better.

We need to preserve the affordable units that we have, and ensure residents know about changes in their housing situation.

When regulated affordable housing properties convert to market-rate, residents are placed at risk of displacement and homelessness due to rising rents that they simply cannot afford. This is all the more true if tenants do not have time to prepare. Preparation can take many forms: organizing among neighbors to find a non-profit that can preserve the building; finding a way to boost a household's income to afford a large rent increase; or moving. Any of these options takes time and significant effort. HB 3042 provides tenants 20 months' advance notice of a potentially life-changing event – the conversion of their homes to market-rate.

In addition, for existing tenants HB 3042 creates a modest protection from large rent increases for a three-year period following the expiration of affordability restrictions, requiring landlords to seek approval from OHCS for a rent increase in excess of five percent. This is a reasonable measure to ease the transition from regulated to open-market rents. We urge you to support HB 3042. Thank you.