

TO: Senate Committee on Housing and Development
FROM: Loren Naldoza
RE: Supporting SB 722, as introduced
DATE: March 26, 2025



Chair Pham, Vice Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in strong support of SB 722, as introduced, which would make needed improvements to Oregon laws protecting tenants.

Oregon Food Bank's mission is "to eliminate hunger and its root causes... *because no one should be hungry.*" Yet one third more Oregonians experience hunger today than before the pandemic. Last year, we saw 2.5 million visits to our network of over 1,200 food assistance sites through the Oregon Food Bank Network - a 31% increase from the previous year.

Housing insecurity is a root cause of hunger.

As part of the State's work to end food insecurity, the Legislature must also address one of its largest underlying causes: our state's housing affordability and cost of living crises. Everyone deserves a safe place to call home—and no one should have to choose between buying food and paying for housing. Yet Oregonians who are renters are three times more likely to experience food insecurity than homeowners.¹

The lack of safe, stable, and affordable housing remains one of the leading drivers of hunger and poverty throughout our state. Roughly 138,000 renter households in Oregon (or 22 percent) have extremely low incomes, with a household total income at or below the federal poverty line, or 30 percent of their area median income (AMI).² Oregon also has a shortage of over 100,000 rental homes that are affordable and available for households with extremely low incomes. Specifically, the annual household income needed to afford a two-bedroom rental home is roughly \$62,000.³

SB 722 is a simple measure that would continue to help address our housing crisis by extending coverage of existing rent stabilization laws to households that are currently left out of those protections due to the age of their building/unit. The bill would reduce the current fifteen year

¹ Mark Edwards, Food Insecurity in Oregon: Considering the Role of Housing, Oregon State University, Nov. 2024. https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/sites/liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/2024-11/Oregon_Food_Insecurity_Rates_2021-2023_november_2024.pdf.

² National Low Income Housing Coalition, "Housing Needs by State, Oregon," <https://nlihc.org/housing-needs-by-state/oregon>.

³ *Id.*

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exemption from the statewide rent stabilization statute to seven years. It also addresses one new and emerging issue by prohibiting the use of artificial intelligence to artificially inflate rents.

Everyone deserves a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home. SB 722 further ensures that housing remains affordable by preventing abruptly large rent increases and other increases that are recommended by AI. We urge your support of SB 722, as introduced.

Sincerely,
Loren Naldoza