

Testimony of Anneliese Koehler, State and Regional Affairs Advisor

Senate Committee on Housing and Development

February 2, 2022



Metro is the elected regional government that serves nearly 1.7 million people in the 24 cities and three counties of the Portland metropolitan area. We provide a broad range of public services that include land use and transportation planning, solid waste and recycling operations, housing and homeless services, management of parks and natural areas, and operation of major visitor facilities like the Oregon Convention Center and the Oregon Zoo.

Metro supports efforts to advance solutions to alleviate the impacts of extreme heat induced by climate change on our most vulnerable community members.

This summer's record-breaking temperatures were not a one-time event; as we face the realities of climate change, hotter summers can be expected in the region and across the Pacific Northwest and immediate action is needed to address the impacts of these extreme temperatures on low income and BIPOC community members. In response, over the summer and early fall, Metro worked with local jurisdictional partners to develop solutions for our affordable housing bond program. We believe that it is imperative that moving forward, all affordable housing bond funded projects incorporate some form of in-unit air conditioning and we are working with our local jurisdictional partners to incorporate cooling strategies for existing and future projects. In order to help with the additional costs, Metro allocated an additional \$8m to support incorporating in-unit cooling solutions.

While we work to address our own affordable housing bond projects residents' cooling needs, additional steps and assistance are needed from the state to holistically respond to the impacts of extreme heat. Funding to support upgrading and installing cooling systems and limiting restrictions on access to cooling are crucial, necessary steps to ensure that Oregonians, particularly our most vulnerable residents, are able to cope with the new norm of extreme temperatures. We urge the Legislature to support efforts that advance these solutions and alleviate the impacts of increasingly hot and record-breaking summers.