



**OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER DAN RYAN  
CITY OF PORTLAND**

June 14, 2021

Representative Smith Warner, Chair  
House Committee on Rules  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street, NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for SB 278 Safe Harbor Amendment

Chair Smith Warner and Members of the Committee,

The City of Portland strongly supports the Safe Harbor Amendment to SB 278. We must ensure that the steps Oregon collectively took to prevent evictions and keep people housed during the pandemic do not fall short in the final moments before financial relief reaches the thousands of Oregonians that need it most. We are deeply concerned that not enough assistance will get out the door in time to protect people facing eviction starting July 1<sup>st</sup>.

With 1 in 5 Oregon renters residing in Portland and 1 in 4 Oregon renters living in Multnomah County, the City in partnership with the County, strongly supported SB 282 to allow the State sufficient time to distribute critical Federal rent assistance. Unfortunately, a gap in protections has been unintentionally created. The Safe Harbor amendment will provide a narrow, targeted fix to the issue we face. As of June 7<sup>th</sup>, more than 8,000 households had applied for Emergency Rent Assistance and 70% of the applicants requested assistance with July rent. It would be devastating if people lost their homes because money didn't get allocated in time.

The Safe Harbor Amendment provides that:

- If a tenant has applied for rent assistance, an eviction would be prevented for 60 days while that application is pending.
- If after 60 days a landlord has not received assistance, they can move forward with an eviction filing.
- These provisions will sunset February 28, 2022.

We urge you to support the Safe Harbor amendment to SB 278 to prevent a wave of evictions and ensure that those who have applied for rent assistance do not lose their homes while their applications are pending.

Respectfully,

Dan Ryan  
Portland City Commissioner

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