



Chair Fahey, Members of the Committee,

From the beginning of this crisis, Multnomah County's highest priority has been to slow the spread of COVID-19 and keep people safe. We've known for years about the inseparable connection between housing and health.

As we began to understand the monumental challenges that the pandemic would pose for our community early last year, we recognized that helping people stay in their homes would be both a public health imperative, and simply the right thing to do.

While the ongoing vaccination efforts represent a very real sense of hope and optimism on the near horizon, it doesn't mean that our community's recovery from the pandemic -- especially the kind of recovery that brings relief, opportunity and stability for **all** Oregonians; a kind of recovery that doesn't leave anyone behind -- will be automatic.

Considering the scale of resources required to help people meet their rent obligations, the Legislature needs to make sure there is time to distribute funding through a system that was never designed to help so many people in this short of time.

The Dash 2 amendments to SB 278 give renters who have applied for rent assistance 60 days of protection from eviction while their application is pending. The sixty day clock will start when the tenant notifies their landlord of their application.

Without this amendment, renters who have applied for rent assistance will have no protection. Evicting people who have applied for help is simply unfair. The bill ensures stability for tenants while getting resources into the hands of landlords.

SB 278 protects both tenants and landlords. Oregon has significant federal dollars available for rental assistance to cover up to 12 months of back rent and three months of current and future rent.

We appreciate your consideration and support for the dash 2 amendments to SB 278.

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Deborah Kafoury
Multnomah County Chair

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Sharon Meieran
District 1 Commissioner

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Susheela Jaypal
District 2 Commissioner

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Jessica Vega Pederson
District 3 Commissioner

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Lori Stegmann
District 4 Commissioner