



May 3, 2023

Sheila Stiley, Board chair – NW Coastal Housing

Kymberly Horner, Vice-chair - Portland Community Reinvestment Inc.

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Rita Grady - Polk CDC

Maria Elena Guerra - Farmworker Housing Development Corp

Nkenge Harmon Johnson – Urban League of Portland

Brad Ketch – Rockwood CDC & Community Dev. Corp. of Oregon

Erica Mills – NeighborWorks Umpqua

Shannon Vilhauer – Habitat for Humanity Oregon

Sen. Jama

Chair, Senate Committee on Housing and Development
900 Court St NE, S-409
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for House Bill 2680

Chair Jama, and members of the committee:

For the record, my name is Kevin Cronin, director of member relations and industry support for Housing Oregon.

Housing Oregon is a membership-based statewide association of affordable housing community development corporations (CDCs) committed to serving and supporting low-income Oregonians across the housing needs spectrum – from homeless to homeowner.

Housing Oregon is in support of HB 2680, which proposes narrow changes to the current law that increases consumer protections for renters and clarifies language surrounding the application process for landlords. This measure requires landlords to notify tenants of these consumer protections, helping to create an equitable playing field for this type of business transaction. Application fees create barriers for renters with criminal history, past evictions, or other admission barriers. They disproportionately impact Black female-headed households and contribute to residential segregation.

Oregon has a tight rental market with a historically low vacancy rate. Units between 80% to 120% Fair Market Rent often receive 20 to 30 applications in the first twelve hours of an opening. Renters are most vulnerable to homelessness during a time of transition from one unit to another.

Application fees can range up to \$75 per adult and represent a substantial barrier for someone exiting homelessness. Refunding an application in a timely manner, if not selected, will be a huge boon to renters who are conducting their housing search with limited resources. Tenants who possess a section 8 voucher do not typically get their

application fees subsidized as part of their program, and not having sufficient resources to apply to places puts their on-going affordability subsidy at risk. It's a use-it or lose-it scenario, and they are quite literally, on the clock.

Personally, I've been concerned about application fees for many years. When my wife and I were looking for an apartment in Eugene, we spent over \$300 in application fees. When I asked one company for a refund, they refused to return the money to me without my wife being present, despite me being the credit card holder.

Thank you to Rep Nathanson for sponsoring this bill and we urge the committee to support it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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