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Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon Testimony in Support of SB 278 14 June 2021

Chair Smith Warner, Vice-Chairs Drazan, Holvey, and members of the committee:

Working with over 150 congregations, organizations, and interfaith partners, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) strives to envision communities of faith in ministry together creating a more peaceful, just, sustainable, and compassionate world. EMO works to improve the lives of Oregonians through housing and other direct service programs, dialogue, and advocacy.

EMO strongly supports passage of SB 278, which provides common sense protections for individuals and families who have applied for rent assistance while their applications are being processed. Evicting people who have applied for help would be unconscionable and a step backward for the protections the legislature has ensured for renters this session.

EMO's support for ensuring protections to keep Oregonians in stable housing stems from both our commitment to justice as well as our experience operating four housing-related programs for marginalized communities. **As a community of faith, we proclaim that our state has a moral imperative to keep our neighbors in housing, which includes allowing them to access the services our partners have worked tirelessly to ensure are available to Oregon renters.**

Evicting someone who has done everything right is simply unfair. Renters cannot and should not be the ones who pay the price for the system overload that delays assistance.

We thank the legislature for the significant and necessary steps that have been taken during the pandemic and wildfires that have threatened to push people out of their homes. In these final weeks, **we urge you to remain steadfast in these supports and protections, by swiftly moving SB 278.**

Thank you for your consideration of this essential legislation.

In partnership,

Olivia Asato
Public Policy Associate
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon