

February 2, 2022

House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
900 Court St. NE, H272
Salem, OR 97301

Good afternoon Chair Marsh and members of the committee,

My name is Cara Kangas, and I am the Director of Partnerships with 211info. As you may know, 211 is a free, confidential, and easy to remember phone number for people to call when they have questions about community resources in their area. As we provide information and referral to Oregonians, we also disseminate information, and provide critical and lifesaving resources when emergency incidents take place, helping to alleviate calls to 911.

In the summer of 2021, the pacific NW experienced a severe heat event, the first for many of us in our lifetime. During this event, and the subsequent two severe heat events in July and August, we saw the following:

- 2,800-3,200 per week phone calls during the daytime weekday hours
- 200-500 calls per day during evening hours
- 275-516 calls over the weekends
- 4,500 website searches for severe heat related resources
- 125 requests for transportation to cooling centers

As not all Oregonians have access to the internet, they rely on 211 to provide timely information such as excessive heat alerts, access to cooling and clean air centers, information on air conditioners, questions about heat-related illness, and volunteer and donation opportunities.

211info sees Black, Indigenous, and communities of color experiencing the most disparate impact during times of emergency incident response. Over the summer of 2021:

- over 40% of our contacts identified as a person of color
- almost 83% identified as a low-income household
- Over 24% identified as an older adult

When at-risk communities do not have the means to access alternative housing, such as a motel or hotel room to escape the elements, or are nervous to leave behind their home and their animals, they are left to withstand the elements in their own home; many of which were built or designed without air conditioning, and in neighborhoods that have succumbed to redlining, leaving behind a sparse tree canopy, creating wide variations in surface and air temperatures.

211info supports a yes vote on HB 4058. This will help ensure Oregonian's access to affordable, efficient, and safe heating and cooling during extreme weather events. Not only will this impact homeowners, but also renters who make up just over 37% of the population according to 2019 census data. Renters who often have lease agreements which dictate whether they can have a portable air conditioner within their home.



Supporting this bill will also pave the way for removing barriers for renters to install AC units and provide half a million dollars in funding for landlords to set up cooling centers, on or off site.

Please support our neighbors by voting yes on HB 4058. Thank you for your time.