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Coastal Housing

February 16, 2025

Testimony in Support of HB 3521 House Committee on Housing and Homelessness

Dear Chair Marsh and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kevin Cronin, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Housing Oregon, a statewide coalition of more than 120 affordable housing and community development organizations. Our members include nonprofit developers, property managers, and service providers dedicated to creating and preserving affordable housing across Oregon.

I am writing today in support of HB 3521 because it addresses a critical fairness issue in Oregon's rental market. When a tenant secures housing—especially in competitive markets like college towns—and a landlord agrees to hold the unit in exchange for consideration (a deposit), that agreement carries real consequences for the tenant. They stop searching for other housing, they may decline other offers, and they often make financial and logistical commitments based on the assumption that they will be able to move in.

The problem is that, under current law, a landlord can back out of that agreement at the last minute, leaving tenants scrambling with few, if any, options. This places the entire economic burden of the landlord's business decision on the tenant, even though the landlord was the one who made the initial commitment.

HB 3521 is a straightforward fix. If a landlord accepts consideration to hold a unit for a tenant, they should either honor that commitment or provide the tenant with some form of compensation if they choose to back out. This is a basic industry best practice, and compliance should not be difficult for landlords who operate in good faith.

This bill is about fairness. It ensures that tenants are not left in the lurch after making serious efforts to secure housing. The ability to withdraw a housing offer without consequence gives landlords an unfair level of economic power over tenants. HB 3521 provides a necessary safeguard to prevent these kinds of harmful last-minute disruptions.

I urge your support for HB 3521 to create a fairer, more balanced rental market for all Oregonians.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Kevin Cronin
Director of Policy & Advocacy
Housing Oregon