



March 9, 2020

Senator Kayse Jama, Chair
Senate Committee on Housing and Development
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for SB 282 -1 Amendments

Chair Jama and Members of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of SB 282 with the -1 amendments. We appreciate and support the Legislature's ongoing commitment to keeping people housed during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and we view this legislation as an important part of a broader approach to the pending eviction and debt crisis facing tenants and property owners once the eviction moratorium is lifted.

Specifically, we support extending the repayment period as proposed in this legislation. This is a practical policy that will reasonably allow tenants a pathway to repay the debts they have accrued during the emergency period. Without this policy in place, we have concerns that most tenants with arrears will not be able to make payments on past-due rent and resume paying current rent, which could lead to vulnerable individuals and families facing eviction in the near-term. We also think it makes good fiscal sense as significant federal rent assistance resources have not yet been deployed, and additional federal rent assistance in the American Recovery Act is likely to be approved within the next 24 hours. Extending the repayment period will allow these resources to be deployed into communities, facilitating a pathway out of debt for tenants and helping tenants make current rent payments once the moratorium is lifted. We also support the provision that continues the prohibition on credit reports for rent debt protected by the moratorium or grace period. Many of our community members have faced loss of income through no fault of their own, and we think it is reasonable to protect those individuals and families from having rent debt accrued during that period from becoming a barrier to future housing opportunities.

In conclusion, this legislation is an important component of a holistic approach to keeping people housed and mitigating a pending debt and eviction crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Smith'.

Andy Smith
Government Relations Manager
City of Hillsboro