



February 11th, 2021

Chair Fahey, Vice-Chairs Campos and Morgan, and Members of the House Housing Committee,

**PCUN strongly supports HB 2842 to create a Healthy Homes program.** We are a community-based organization that represents the interests of farmworkers and working Latinx families across the state of Oregon. As members of the Fair Shot For All Coalition we support this policy as part of the 2021 legislative agenda and the ongoing work for environmental justice in Oregon.

We believe that every Oregonian should have a healthy home to live in—especially as Oregon experiences increasingly dangerous wildfire seasons and navigates a respiratory pandemic.

During last year's wildfire season, many of our community members expressed concerns about their living situation because there was smoke leaking into their homes. In fact, 54% of Oregonians live in housing built before 1978 that is energy-inefficient and in need of repairs, weatherproofing, and upgrades for disaster resiliency. The energy-inefficiency of these homes make it difficult for our families to afford energy bills, especially as the summers' heat increases and the winters remain cold.

Additionally, the National Agricultural Workers Survey finds that the average total income of farm workers is between \$20,000 to \$24,999 for a family and twenty-five percent of all farm workers had a family income below the federal poverty line. These workers are unable to make the necessary upgrades in their homes to prevent their exposure to unhealthy living conditions. Consequently, families are more likely to experience sick days and hospital visits caused by mold, cold weather, asthma flare-ups, and the inability to take refuge from bad outdoor air quality.

Creating and funding a Healthy Homes program creates more equity for our communities and makes good fiscal sense for our state. HB 2842 will: 1) help low-income families spend less money on heating and cooling; 2) create good local jobs in retrofitting and repairs; 3) provide a refuge from increasingly bad outdoor air quality; 4) reduce burden on hospitals and families by supporting better respiratory health; and 5) reduce the number of sick days for both adults and kids.

We urge you to vote yes on HB 2842 to help build an Oregon where everyone lives in a home that is healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

Ira Cuello-Martinez  
Climate Policy Associate  
Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN)