



January 31st, 2022

Community Alliance of Tenants  
1320 NE 63rd Ave.  
Portland, OR, 97213

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. The Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT) has served Oregon tenants since 1996. Our mission is to educate and empower tenants to demand safe, stable and affordable rental homes Oregon faces a growing housing crisis.

The CAT Board voted to approve support for SB 1536-1. Our CAT Board of Directors is comprised of tenants from throughout Oregon. They bring the lived experience needed to evaluate bills that will impact landlord tenant law.

SB 1536-1 does a number of important things to provide clarity and strengthen the landlord/tenant relationship around cooling. It's a necessary step to help reduce burden on our emergency rooms and public health services and help support families across Oregon. SB 1536-1:

For years, CAT members have advocated for the right to cooling. The recent heat wave, which disproportionately affected low-income renters, makes this issue not only one of comfort and dignity but also health. Many are surprised to hear that tenants do not have control over the temperature of their home because they do not have the right to add an air conditioner and the windows may not provide adequate ventilation. The upper stories retain more heat and tenants often do not have anywhere to go to find cooler temperatures. As we ready our state for the possibility of another devastating summer heat wave, legislators have a responsibility to act swiftly and provide Oregon renters with a right to cooling.

This bill provides a range of necessary and comprehensive protections:

- SB 1536-1 removes barriers for renters to install portable air conditioners, while maintaining building safety and providing alternative compliance for landlords with rental units that can't support air conditioners.

- SB 1536-1 provides \$500,000 through the Oregon Department of Energy for landlords to set up on- or off-site cooling centers, especially for tenants who can't shelter in their units.

- SB 1536-1 requires cooling in rentals that are:

  - New construction (after a twenty-four month grace period)

  - Renovations (in special situations in which it makes sense to replace a heating system with a dual heating and cooling system)

- SB 1536-1 directs the Oregon Department of Energy to study the opportunities and barriers around ensuring that all affordable housing in Oregon has cooling.

- SB 1536-1 provides \$15 million in funding for landlords to install heat + cooling pumps, an efficient technology for year-round comfort and to address the electrical, mechanical, or structural barriers that may prevent the installation otherwise.

- SB 1536-1 provides \$2 million in funding for extreme weather shelters including cooling, warming, and cleaner air shelters.

Please provide Oregonians with the tools, guidance and policy to be safe in their homes vote yes for SB 1536 and approve the -1 amendments.



**community**  
alliance of  
**tenants**

Sincerely,

*Kim McCarty*

Kim McCarty  
Executive Director  
Community Alliance of Tenants