



February 2nd, 2022

Chair Fahey, Vice Chairs Campos and Morgan, and members of the Housing Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. The Springfield-Eugene Tenant Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to supporting and advocating for renters. We operate the only free and general-purpose Tenant Hotline in our region. Our Board of Directors is highly active and includes housing lawyers, staff from the local housing authority, mental health therapists, students, and more. Roughly 70% of the renters that we serve directly identify as low income or severely low/no income. On Thursday, January 27th, our Board formally voted to **support HB 4125** for the following reasons:

- HB 4125 is a call for transparency. With Oregon's housing crisis, it is extremely challenging for Oregonian renters to find a new home. Many renters are within a time crunch of finding a new home within 30 days, which means that renters will often be applying for multiple housing units. Application fees can average between \$50 - \$75 per unit, and tenants are often paying hundreds of dollars in application fees alone.
- In all other online purchases or submission of a pending fee, you are able to know the status of your application and where your money currently is. There is clear and accessible information that you can access at any time, and it seems the only exception is with landlord rental application fees. Tenants in our community of Lane County and across Oregon are often unaware of if their fee has been used, if it is still pending to be run, or if it even will be returned.
- Written notification of when your application is run for a background check will help keep tenants apprised of the status of their application. HB 4125 will support tenants who have applied to multiple units and know how many background and credit checks have been run against them, which will help prevent lowering their credit score if there are many checks.
- ORS 90.295 states that fees that have not been processed must be returned "within a reasonable time." This means very little in practice. Tenants in our community share that often they do not receive their application fee returned, or report that they receive their fees back after 3-5 months. The updated language to include a 14 day cap will ensure that tenants know when to expect their fees returned and ensure that landlords know what is required of them.

On behalf of SETA's Board of Directors, of tenants in Lane County, and of renters all across Oregon,
we urge you to pass HB 4125 out of committee.

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