

February 2, 2022

Senate Committee on Housing and Development
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Jama and Members of the Committee,

The City of Gresham supports SB 1536 and HB 4058 to protect residents during extreme heat events.

SB 1536 will remove the barriers to install portable air conditioners while maintaining building safety and provide cooled spaces for tenants in certain conditions. The bill also provides funding for loan and rebate programs to help landlords pay for efficient heating and cooling equipment, which includes support to help address the electrical, mechanical, and other structural barriers to increased cooling load. The legislation also as well as additional grants to establish extreme weather shelters such as cooling centers, warming centers, and air shelters.

HB 4058 will establish a program to distribute emergency air conditioners and air purifiers to eligible households for medical assistance. The bill also creates funding for efficient heat pump incentives prioritized for low-income and environmental justice communities, establishes a heat pump technical advisory council, addresses workforce equity issues, and directs the Oregon Public Utility Commission to study methods to address energy bill spikes during extreme weather events. The legislation acknowledges that the technologies that keep families safe during heat waves, cold snaps, and bad air quality days can cause energy bill spikes and work must be done to alleviate this.

Last summer’s unprecedented heat left many of our residents vulnerable. Many were made more vulnerable because they did not have access to cooling opportunities in their home. Gresham supports these bills in order to provide guidance and financial assistance to keep residents safe during these periods. This legislation is complementary to local efforts underway; as part of Gresham’s Regional Affordable Housing Bond program the City is also working with Metro to incorporate cooling strategies for existing and future housing bond investments in the City.

We urge your support for SB 1536 in order to protect our state's residents from future extreme heat events.

Sincerely,

Brian Monberg
Government Affairs Manager
City of Gresham