



To: Senate Committee on Housing and Development

From: Julia DeGraw, Oregon Conservation Network, and Oregon League of Conservation Voters

Date: 2/3/2022

RE: SB 1536, the Emergency Heat Relief for Communities Bill

Chair Jama, Vice Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on SB 1536. On behalf of our thousands of members and supporters in Oregon, we would like to register the Oregon Conservation Network's strong support to pass SB 1536 to provide Oregonians better access to affordable, efficient, and safe heating and cooling during extreme weather events.

The Oregon Conservation Network (OCN) is coordinated through the Oregon League of Conservation Voters (OLCV). OCN is a coalition of 38 not-for-profit organizations throughout the state, united to advocate for pro-conservation legislation and to fight policies that threaten our state's natural legacy. OCN is powered by tens of thousands of Oregonians who belong to their membership organizations. We work to promote policies that will ensure a better Oregon for our children – and to fight policies that do not.

We write in support of HB 4058, the Emergency Heat Relief for Communities bill which is one of OCN's Major Priorities for a Healthy Oregon for the 2022 legislative session. OCN is partnering with Verde and the Community Alliance of Tenants to pass this and HB 4058 as part of an Emergency Heat Relief Bill package that is a direct response to the deadly and unprecedented heat dome and other climate-driven extreme weather events of last year. Nearly 100 Oregonians died during last summer's heat dome event, many of them in their homes because they lacked access to life-saving cooling devices such as air conditioners and electric heat pumps. Many of those who died in their homes were renters who have less control over how their spaces are cooled and in many cases face unnecessary restrictions around whether they can install life saving cooling devices like air-conditioners. The most vulnerable people to extreme temperatures are seniors, people with disabilities, or people with underlying medical conditions, especially those living in upper-level multifamily units or manufactured homes.

SB 1536 helps address the problems laid out above by removing barriers for renters to install air conditioners, and it incentivizes landlords to install safe, efficient, and life-saving heating and cooling systems like electric heat pumps. The bill also requires that new multi-family buildings be built with heating and cooling systems. The bill will provide funding for extreme weather shelters—something renters across the state need more than ever as climate change continues to cause extreme weather events.



We urge you to support SB 1536 to ensure more Oregonians have access to life-saving air conditioners and better access to clean, safe, and efficient heating and cooling systems.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia B. DeGraw".

Julia B. DeGraw

Coalition Director

Oregon Conservation Network, and Oregon League of Conservation Voters

Testimony Submitted On behalf of all the OCN Member Organizations:

1000 Friends of Oregon, Association of Oregon Recyclers, Audubon Society of Portland, Beyond Toxics, Cascadia Wildlands, Center for Biological Diversity, Center for Food Safety, Central Oregon LandWatch, Climate Solutions, Defenders of Wildlife, Engineers for a Sustainable Future, The Environmental Center, Environment Oregon, Friends of Mount Hood, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Greater Hells Canyon Council, League of Women Voters of Oregon, Native Fish Society, Neighbors for Clean Air, Oceana, Oregon Coast Alliance, Oregon Environmental Council, Oregon Land and Water Alliance, Oregon League of Conservation Voters, Oregon Natural Desert Association, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition, Oregon Wild, Pew Charitable Trusts, Renewable Northwest, Rogue Riverkeeper, Sierra Club Oregon Chapter, The Street Trust, Surfrider Foundation, Trout Unlimited, Tualatin Riverkeepers, WaterWatch of Oregon, Wild Salmon Center