

June 21, 2023

Representative Fahey, Chair
House Committee on Rules
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony in Support of SB 611B

Chair Fahey and Members of the House Committee,

I am writing in support of SB 611B, which provides reasonable and necessary rent stabilization for tenants, while protecting landlords' and developers' ability to maintain a reasonable profit. Lawmakers did the right thing passing SB 608 in 2019. But we are now facing extreme inflation and without SB 611B, the 2023 rate increase is an unreasonable 14.6%. Tens of thousands of renters are at risk of displacement due to these extreme rent increases.

With rents increasing up to 14.6% in 2023 and pandemic eviction protections fully phased out, Oregon has seen a drastic increase in evictions. The current allowable annual rent increases are capped at 7% plus the Consumer Price Index. While this amount may be reasonable most years, during times of extreme inflation, these rent increases can be exorbitant.

According to a study from PSU, "Eviction rates fell close to zero in the early months of the pandemic and rose to over 50% of historical average in July 2021, towards the end of the CDC Moratorium, surpassing historical average in June, August, and September of 2022." With even higher rent increases in 2023, this number is expected to continue to increase. This bill would cap rents at a reasonable amount, immediately impacting the catastrophically high rent increases caused by extreme inflation.

SB 611B is a reasonable proposal that will prevent extreme rent increases and displacements, while allowing landlords to take inflation into account and preserving the ability to reset rents to market rates in between tenancies. New properties continue to be exempt from the law, ensuring there is no impact on new development.

SB 611B is an action that the legislature can take now to have an immediate impact on our state's housing crisis as we also work on the longer term solutions of increasing supply and providing support to rehouse our currently homeless neighbors.

We at Multnomah County support SB 611B and ask that you take this critical step to address the eviction crisis and homelessness prevention for renters across the state.

Thank you,

Stacy Cowan
Government Relations, Sr. State Policy Manager