



Testimony on behalf of the City of Eugene on HB3237 3/14/23

Good morning Chair Dexter, Vice Chairs Gamba and Helfrich, and Members of the Committee, I am Lucy Vinis, Mayor of Eugene. I am here in my official capacity as Mayor to speak on behalf of the City of Eugene in strong support for House Bill 3237, which codifies into state statute the ability for local governments to set a cap on renter application screening charges.

As many of you know, the City of Eugene is engaged in a multi-phase process to review and update the city's Rental Housing Code program to include renter protections that aim to keep people housed, lessen the costs associated with rental housing, and stop discriminatory rental housing practices. Enhancing renter protections is identified as one of the anti-displacement actions in the city's approved housing strategy; the 'Housing Implementation Pipeline'. Much of the policy work of cities is defined by robust levels of citizen engagement and Eugene's work in this area is no different.

The intergovernmental Eugene-Springfield Housing Policy Board or "HPB", is comprised of one elected official each from Eugene and Lane County, local community members, and ex-officio members representing local community housing development and support organizations. In late 2019, the HPB created a 'Renter Protections Committee' to develop policy recommendations for HPB to provide to City Council. The final HPB recommendations were presented and reviewed by the City Council in November 2021. The City Council directed staff to assess the feasibility and resources needed to implement renter protections consistent with HPB's recommendations as well as several additional protections raised by Councilors, and on March 16, 2022, City Council directed the City Manager to hold a public hearing on an ordinance implementing Phase I of the recommended renter protections. The

City Council approved Ordinance 20670 adopting Renter Protections Phase I on July 11, 2022.

Phase I protections include:

- A. Support services (including data collection),
- B. Move-in/out photo documentation,
- C. Rental history reference,
- D. Tenant educational information, and
- E. Cap applicant screening charges at \$10

Following the Council's adoption of the Phase I Renter Protections, a group of landlords filed suit challenging the City's authority to impose a cap on applicant screening charges. The trial court determined that the Oregon Residential Landlord Tenant Act preempts the City from imposing a local cap. The City disagrees with the trial court's decision and has appealed the trial court's decision to the Court of Appeals, but HB 3237 would conclusively answer the question by clearly providing that local governments have the authority to adopt local caps on applicant screening charges.

Last night the City Council held a public hearing on additional proposed Renter Protections, which provided the opportunity for robust community engagement and dialogue about further renter protections that Council will consider as part of Phase 2; including:

- Limiting security deposits;
- Applications processed in the order received;
- Relocation assistance; and
- Eviction reporting.

Eugene supports HB 3237 because it would clearly establish the authority of local governments across the state to determine the appropriate level of local applicant screening charges based on their local conditions. I appreciate the opportunity to provide some background and context for Eugene's activities on this topic and ask for your support for HB 3237. Thank you for your time and your service to our state.