

SB 54 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Housing and Development

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/19

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure requires landlords to provide residential tenants with indoor cooling or cooling spaces for multiunit buildings with 10 units or more. It requires, by January 2036, that all landlords provide indoor cooling.

Detailed Summary:

Requires landlords operating multi-unit structures of ten units or more to provide cooling via adequate cooling methods – central air conditioning, heat pump, passive-cooling design techniques, or a portable air conditioning device that is provided by the landlord – to each bedroom of the dwelling on any day where there is an outdoor temperature of more than 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Defines adequate cooling methods as those capable of cooling and maintaining a room temperature at least 15 degrees cooler than the outside temperature, or 80 degrees, whichever is cooler. Allows, as an alternative, that a landlord can provide access to a community cooling space capable of maintaining temperatures at least 15 degrees cooler than the outside temperature, or 80 degrees, whichever is cooler.

Requires a landlord for any dwelling for which building permits were issued on or after January 1, 2026, to provide cooling to at least one room of the unit, not including a bathroom.

Replaces “heat” with “heating, cooling methods” as an essential service for all residential tenancies, effective January 1, 2036. Defines a residential unit as uninhabitable if it lacks “cooling methods or facilities,” replacing language that makes this habitability standard a requirement only in certain situations and in certain dwellings.

Sunsets, on January 1, 2036:

1. Requirement that the Housing and Community Services Department provide cooling information for landlords; and
2. Requirement that the Oregon Department of Energy provide grants for landlords to provide community cooling spaces.

Fiscal impact: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

Revenue impact: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 The amendment removes access to a community cooling space as an alternative to a landlord providing adequate cooling methods to each bedroom of a dwelling.

BACKGROUND:

According to the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Oregon’s average temperatures have increased by 2 degrees Fahrenheit in the last half century. The Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) has found that

This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.

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Oregon's historical mean for total summer days with a heat index of over 90 degrees Fahrenheit is 13; by mid-century, this average is expected to grow to 25 to 48 days. In 2021, 96 Oregonians died in heat-related deaths, and a heat-wave in June of 2024 killed at least another six. According to county assessors, none of those who died had cooling systems in their primary residences. Current Oregon law lists heating, but not cooling, as an essential service (Oregon Revised Statutes [ORS] 90.100) and condition of habitability (ORS 90.320).

Access to cooling systems varies depending on tenancy type. According to a landlord trade group, as of 2022, 86 percent of Portland owner-occupied homes have air conditioning compared to only 66 percent of renter homes; over 60 percent of those rental homes relied on single-room portable AC units. The [Oregon Cooling Needs Study](#), published by the ODOE in Dec 2023, found that only 42 percent of all manufactured, multifamily, RV and agricultural housing in the state had access to adequate cooling methods. Senate Bill 1536 (2022) protected the right of tenants to have cooling methods in their units but did not require landlords to provide them. It also required Oregon Housing and Community Services to provide information to landlords about extreme heat events and relevant programs landlords could use to provide adequate cooling to tenants, a provision that is sunset in 2036 by SB 54.