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February 17, 2025

Representative Pam Marsh
Chair, House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
900 Court St NE, S-409
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 3521

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Anderson, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson,

Portland Tenants United, the Portland city-wide tenant union, writes to you today in support of HB 3521, which would require landlords to promptly refund “holding” deposits and pay a penalty if they fail to give possession of the rental to the tenant. Through organizing, direct action, coalition building, and civic engagement, Portland Tenants United fights to keep people in their homes, and to achieve dignity and security for all tenants.

Tenants face many financial burdens when moving from one rental property to another, one of which is the prospect of leases overlapping, putting them in a position of having to pay rent for two places at once. Holding deposits are a way of allowing a tenant more time to move while also giving the landlord security of knowing the unit is rented. However, especially in large multi-family units, landlords often fail to deliver possession to the tenant in a timely fashion or worse, try to deliver possession of an uninhabitable property. Tenants are faced with either losing their deposit or moving into unsafe housing. HB 3521 would still provide that security for landlords while also creating a small incentive for them to not delay turning over keys or renting properties in poor condition.

With the spectre of less and less funding for basic functions of our government at every level, we need to give tenants every tool possible to ensure they have safe, stable, and affordable housing. HB 3521 would cost ethical landlords nothing while disincentivizing bad actors. Please vote yes to move HB 3521 forward.

Sincerely,

Portland Tenants United Organizing Committee