



March 3, 2025

Senate Committee on Housing and Development
Oregon Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Support for SB 973, SB 31, and SB 32

Dear Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

I write to you on behalf of Home Forward in support of SB 973, SB 31, and SB 32. This suite of bills provides important protections for tenants of affordable housing at risk of converting to market-rate housing to advance housing stability and avoid homelessness.

Home Forward is the Public Housing Authority (PHA) for Multnomah County and the largest provider of affordable housing in the state of Oregon. We serve approximately 18,000 low-income households by providing affordable housing, administering rent assistance, and providing supportive services. We own over 7,200 affordable homes throughout Multnomah County and provide households with services which range from housing stability supports to health and wellness. Meanwhile, we fund rent assistance for over 12,000 households each month. We also administer emergency rent assistance programs that benefit landlords and tenants alike, including Short Term Rent Assistance and the Landlord Guarantee Fund. Home Forward's mission is to create a better community by providing housing stability through affordable housing development, housing choice expansion, services that support quality of life, and advocacy to improve local and national housing systems.

Publicly supported affordable housing serves as a key foundation for thousands of Oregonians, providing them with secure and stable homes in the face of an increasingly unaffordable housing market. When these affordability restrictions expire, residents are at risk of losing their homes, further exacerbating homelessness and housing insecurity across our state. Over the next five years, 3,850 units of affordable housing will face the end of their use restrictions. The reality is that we will not be able to preserve all these unit thus it is imperative that we take proactive steps to ensure that these tenants—many of whom are low-income families, seniors, and individuals with disabilities—are not displaced or subjected to untenable rent increases. SB 973, SB 31, and SB 32 provides a comprehensive set of protections including:

- SB 937 requires that landlords inform applicants for affordable housing of the date when the property's affordability restrictions end so applicants can understand the long-term stability of a future tenancy. A second reminder notice will be required to all tenants 30 months in advance of the expiration date. The notice SB 937 creates will give applicants the critical information.
- SB 31 creates a fund to mitigate the impacts of expiring affordability for tenants. These funds can be used flexibly to meet each household's own circumstances including helping to offset the higher rents at a tenant's current property, moving expenses, and move-in costs in a new home.

- SB 32 will improve public awareness of the preservation crisis by improving the OHCS preservation dashboard. The data that will not only assist legislators respond to the problem of expiring affordable housing by having more accurate data but will support Home Forward, and other mission driven housing providers, to support efforts to purchase expiring properties in order to keep them affordable.

I urge you to take immediate action to protect these tenants and pass SB 973, SB 31, and SB 32. Thank you for the opportunity to offer support. Please contact me at christina.dirks@homeforward.org or (503) 348-1196 regarding these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christina Dirks', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Christina Dirks
Director of Policy and Planning