



March 17, 2025

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

RE: Support for SB 722

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

I write to you on behalf of Home Forward in support of SB 722. This important legislation will enhance housing stability and expand access to rental housing for Oregonians by doing two things. First, this bill prohibits the use of algorithm-driven software that unfairly inflates rents and restricts housing availability based on nonpublic competitor data. Second, this bill prevents extreme rent spikes by extending coverage of our state's rent stabilization statutes.

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 through the Housing Choice Voucher program and another forms of rent assistance each month. 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.

As a PHA, we witness firsthand the struggles of families, seniors, and individuals with disabilities who, despite having rental assistance, are unable to secure housing due to systemic obstacles. When landlords rely on algorithmic software that prioritizes profit maximization over fair housing access, it exacerbates Oregon's housing crisis by artificially inflating rents and reducing the number of available units. This practice disproportionately impacts low-income renters, particularly those using Housing Choice Vouchers, and limits their ability to find stable homes in their communities.

To further strengthen housing stability, we urge the legislature to expand rent stabilization protections to newly constructed housing that is seven years or older, rather than the current fifteen-year threshold. In Oregon, nearly half of all renters are rent burdened and a quarter are severely cost burdened. Rent burdens disproportionately affect certain groups, such as BIPOC

communities, people with disabilities, and people who identify as women, leaving these community members highly vulnerable to displacement and housing instability. By strengthening rent stabilization protections, we can provide a crucial safeguard against sudden rent spikes and help protect renters who are most at risk of financial hardship and displacement. In a housing market where affordability is increasingly out of reach for many, this change would provide essential relief to renters struggling to keep up with rising costs.

I strongly urge the legislature to pass SB 722 and provide the support needed to make Oregon's rental housing market more accessible and fair for all residents. Thank you for the opportunity to offer support. Please contact me at (503) 348-1196 or christina.dirks@homeforward.org regarding these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'C' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Christina Dirks
Director of Policy and Planning