



community alliance of tenants

March 12th, 2025
Senate Committee on Housing and Development Oregon
State Capitol
900 Court St NE Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support SB 722

Chair Pham, Vice Chair Anderson, and Members of the committee

My name is Alex Rhodes and I am the Board President of Community Alliance of Tenants, Oregon's only statewide tenants' rights organization.

I submit this testimony on behalf of the Community Alliance of Tenants board. The CAT Board is largely comprised of tenants which gives CAT needed direction informed by the lived experience of our leadership and tenant members. We urge you to support Senate Bill 722 because it will improve our state's rent stabilization statutes and prohibit the use of price-fixing software to inflate rents. This is a no-cost policy tool to help address our unfolding housing affordability crisis.

In my own experience with moving this year, I faced the difficult decision of moving from my relatively affordable apartment to a new apartment building. The upfront move-in costs were difficult but new housing was the only housing we could find to meet our air-quality health needs. Because we have moved to a newer building we know that anytime in the coming year we could receive a rent increase of any amount. I know that there are many people with a health concern or disability who have no choice but to accept the uncertainty of possible rent hikes. If we do get a large rent increase we may be forced to move again and we may not find the quality of housing that we need.

We strongly urge you to support SB 722, a critical bill that will protect more Oregon tenants from predatory rent increases and the devastating consequences of displacement. Each year our organization hears from thousands of renters facing impossible financial choices.

The bill reduces the new construction exemption from the statewide rent stabilization statute from 15 years down to **7 years**. This change strikes a balance between continuing to encourage new units to come into the market and ensuring that these units become affordable. As new housing continues to be built to meet the housing needs of Oregonians, rental units would be more quickly covered by the reasonable rent increase protections.

SB 722 also amends the Landlord-Tenant Act to prohibit the use of price-fixing AI software to artificially inflate rents. These kinds of products are the subject of national attention and concern, and Oregon has joined a federal lawsuit against this practice. Many local jurisdictions are taking steps to curtail this practice. Price fixing has no place in Oregon, and we cannot afford to allow this practice to exacerbate our housing crisis.

For these reasons, we urge your strong support of SB 722. Oregon renters need real protections, and they need them now. Thank you for your time and your commitment to housing justice.

Sincerely,

Alex Rhodes
Community Alliance of Tenants Board President
On behalf of the Community Alliance of Tenants Board