

Representative Pham

Members of the Senate Committee On Housing and Development
900 Court St NE, S-409
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Pham, Vice Chair Anderson, and Members of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development,

I am a policy associate with the Eugene Tenant Alliance, an organization dedicated to advocating for the well-being of renters across Oregon. I am writing to urge your support for Senate Bill 722, a critical piece of legislation that will address two pressing issues affecting Oregon renters: AI-driven rent price manipulation and the rent cap loophole for new construction.

First, corporate landlords are increasingly relying on AI rent-setting software to artificially inflate housing costs. Companies like Greystar use tools such as RealPage to coordinate rent increases across multiple properties, eliminating competition and driving up prices beyond what the market would naturally dictate. This is why the Oregon Department of Justice has joined a national lawsuit against RealPage and several major landlords, including Greystar, which owns 11 properties in the Eugene-Springfield area. This isn't just an issue affecting Portland—these predatory pricing algorithms are being used statewide, pushing rents higher in communities both large and small. Without action, more Oregonians will be priced out of their homes by software designed to maximize investor profits at the expense of working families.

Second, SB 722 closes the rent cap loophole that corporate landlords have been exploiting for years. Oregon's rent stabilization law was meant to protect tenants from extreme rent hikes, but an exemption for newly constructed buildings has allowed landlords to impose unaffordable increases of hundreds of dollars per month on tenants living in buildings nearly a decade old. There is no economic justification for these excessive hikes—this is price gouging, plain and simple.

The consequences of failing to regulate rent across all properties are well-documented. A 2018 study on San Francisco's rent control expansion found that exempting certain buildings did not encourage meaningful new housing development. Instead, it led to a 15% decline in rental housing supply as landlords converted units into condos or redeveloped properties to escape rent control regulations. This shift resulted in an increase in high-end housing catering to wealthier individuals, accelerating gentrification and deepening income inequality. Even more troubling, the study found that overall rents in the city increased by 5.1%, showing how rent control loopholes can worsen affordability rather than improve it. Oregon must learn from these mistakes and take action now.

SB 722 ensures that all tenants—no matter when their building was constructed—receive the protections they deserve. It also prevents corporate landlords from using AI-driven price manipulation to exploit renters. Passing this bill is an urgent step toward ensuring fair, stable, and affordable housing for all Oregonians. I strongly urge you to support SB 722 and stand with Oregon's renters in the fight for housing justice. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Adriana Grant
Policy Associate
Eugene Tenant Alliance