



Portland Housing Bureau

March 18, 2025

Senator Khanh Pham
Chair, Senate Committee on Housing and Development
900 Court St. NE, S-407
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for Senate Bill 54-1

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

On behalf of the Portland Housing Bureau (PHB), I am writing to express our support for Senate Bill 54-1. This bill's implementation would enhance climate resilience and increase public health in Oregon by ensuring access to cooling for renters.

Extreme heat events are increasing in frequency, duration, and magnitude due to climate change, and these events are particularly dangerous for older adults, those with chronic health conditions, and individuals with disabilities. Renters, particularly those with lower incomes, often do not have the freedom or resources to install air conditioning, putting them at higher risk for complications or death during extreme heat events.

Portland established Cooling Portland in the wake of the 2021 heat dome that led to the deaths of nearly 100 Oregonians. The program provides portable cooling equipment to low-income renters, prioritizing those most vulnerable to the impacts of extreme heat events, but Cooling Portland cannot address the increasing need for cooling alone. By requiring rental property owners to provide access to cooling, SB 54-1 can reduce heat-related risk more broadly.

We urge your support of SB 54-1.

Sincerely,

Helmi Hisserich
Director