



Senate Committee on Housing and Development  
900 Court St NE  
Salem, OR 97301

March 19th, 2025

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

SETA is a non-profit, public service organization dedicated to renters' rights and interests. We provide free community resources, including our free Tenant Hotline, and we directly serve about 240 renter households every month through combinations of several programs.

**SETA strongly supports SB 54.**

SB 54 raises an important question: Why is there a disparity between the right to protection from excessive cold temperatures but a failure to address the equally dangerous risks posed by excessive heat?

Extreme heat is a significant health threat, particularly for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, young children, individuals with disabilities, and low-income communities. Prolonged exposure to high temperatures can lead to many heat-related illnesses, which can often be fatal if not treated promptly. Despite this, many tenants in Oregon continue to live in homes without adequate cooling options, putting their health and safety at serious risk.

Oregon, as a state, [has a high rate of heat deaths per-capita](#), ranking third behind Arizona and Nevada. To be clear, both of these states historically have much higher temperatures than Oregon and in response, both of these states have stronger heat-protection laws for tenants than Oregon.

The very top line of Oregon's habitability code, ORS 90.320, begins with: "A landlord shall at all times during the tenancy maintain the dwelling unit in a habitable condition." Another way to frame this is "No tenant should lose their life while seeking shelter in their own home."

A true "right" to cooling ensures that all tenants, regardless of income level, have a safe and livable environment during extreme weather conditions.



**We urge you to join us in strong support of SB 54 as a vital safeguard for all tenants to survive extreme weather conditions.**

If you'd like to connect with me, please reach out to [tmorris@springfieldeugenetenantassociation.com](mailto:tmorris@springfieldeugenetenantassociation.com). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tim".

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Timothy Morris  
Executive Director  
Springfield Eugene Tenant Association