
March 19, 2025

To: Senate Committee on Housing and Development

RE: Support SB 54

Dear Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Anderson and members of the committee,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing environmental justice, climate, business, labor, faith, people of color, low-income, rural, and disabled communities from across Oregon, we support the efforts made by SB 54 by requiring landlords provide cooling for homes, but would recommend the effective date be as soon as possible.

SB 54 requires landlords of 10 or more dwelling units to provide cooling if the outside temperatures reach over 80F. This temperature threshold is consistent with other heat protections within the state of Oregon, such as the OSHA heat and smoke rules.¹ SB 54 is flexible because it does not require retrofits, or specific cooling mechanisms, and allows landlords to bring in portable cooling units.

Such policies to protect renters are needed in the face of increasing warming. It is estimated that the number of hot days above 86°F will double in some areas of the state.² And during the infamous 2021 heat dome, 102 people died. Those who died were older, lived alone and had no working air conditioning, and more than half of the people who died were living in apartments or multifamily units. Additionally, almost half of Oregon homes and apartments were built before 1980, and this housing stock is in desperate need of retrofits.

Oregon has been a national leader in developing policies to ensure that Oregonians can afford to live safely in the homes they live in. For example, the Healthy Homes Grant Program that makes essential home repairs accessible to low-income families, including electrical upgrades, mold abatement, and air filtration systems. And in 2022, the legislature passed SB 1536 and HB 2567 with OJTA's support, to provide financial assistance for the purchase and installation of heat pumps and related energy efficient upgrades to mitigate against extreme temperatures and climate change (the Rental Home

¹ <https://osha.oregon.gov/OSHARules/adopted/2022/heat-wildfire-smoke-rule-summary-2022.pdf>.

² <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/HEALTHYENVIRONMENTS/CLIMATECHANGE/Documents/2020/Climate%20and%20Health%20in%20Oregon%202020%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf>.

Heat Pump Program and Community Heat Pump Deployment Program). These two programs ensure that all Oregonians have access to life-changing heat pumps in their homes.

Oregon is facing both a housing and climate crisis, and solving it requires more than just building new housing or limiting greenhouse gas emissions. It requires the Oregonians already facing environmental disparities to have safe and adequate housing that protects them from the worst impacts of climate warming.

As such, we urge you to continue adding on to this legacy by passing SB 54.

Sincerely,



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