

March 24, 2025

Senate Committee On Housing and Development

RE: SB 54 Support

Good afternoon, Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Marisol De La Torre and I am the government relations and legislative advocate of Oregon Just Transition Alliance (OJTA). We are a movement of low-income, rural, people of color, and disabled folks impacted first and worst by extreme weather events. I am here in support of SB 54, which would require landlords to provide cooling for residential tenants, a service that has become essential given the increase of heat waves in Oregon.

OJTA supports SB 54 because it aligns with core principles of a Just Transition by centering climate resilience. As the temperatures rise in our state, over 50% of Oregonians still lack cooling in their homes. In 2021, we experienced a historic heatdome that resulted in over 100 fatalities. Those who died were often older, lived alone, and lacked working air conditioning, with more than half of the fatalities occurring in apartments or multifamily units. It is estimated that the number of hot days above 86°F will double in some areas of the state by 2040.¹

SB 54 directly addresses this pressing issue by requiring landlords of buildings with more than 10 dwelling units to provide cooling when outside temperatures exceed 80°F. This temperature point is consistent with other heat protections in Oregon, such as the OSHA heat and smoke regulations. The bill is also flexible, as it does not mandate costly retrofits or specific cooling systems, allowing landlords to provide portable cooling units.

Today, Oregon faces both a housing and climate crisis, and solving these issues requires more than just building new housing or limiting climate pollution. It demands that we ensure Oregon renters have safe and adequate housing.

On behalf of OJTA, I urge you to support SB 54 because cooling is not a luxury, it's a lifeline.

Thank you,
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¹[Climate and Health in Oregon: 2020 Report](#), Oregon Health Authority, 2020.