

March 19, 2025

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

**RE: Support for SB 54**

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

My name is Alli Sayre and I'm a tenant and the organizing coordinator for Portland Tenants United, the Portland city-wide tenant union. Through organizing, direct action, coalition building, and civic engagement, Portland Tenants United fights to keep people in their homes, and to achieve dignity and security for all tenants. I am submitting this testimony in support of Senate Bill 54, which would require landlords of larger multi-family buildings to provide cooling for tenants on days where the outdoor temperature exceeds 80 degrees, require new buildings to have air conditioning, and in 2036, require all units to have air conditioning as a condition of habitability.

I have personally lived in Oregon almost 15 years and I have only lived in one rental that had air conditioning. When I first moved here, it seemed like there was only a week or two a year where it got really hot. Now heat waves come and go the entire summer. Not having air conditioning is not just unpleasant, it can be life threatening. Last year, 17 people died in a single "heat wave". In 2021, 107 people died, most of them renters.

It really says it all that the landlord-side testimony today has been openly opposed to this because it's expensive. Maybe we should make it a bit more expensive when landlords kill their tenants due to providing uninhabitable housing. It's pretty hard to feel bad for a landlord who says it'll cost a mere \$5,000 - \$10,000 per unit to provide cooling when the average rent in Oregon is close to \$2,000 a month. Meaning it would only cost landlords 3-5 months' rent for this one-time installation cost. And it's not required until 2036, meaning if it were passed landlords would have 11 years to save up their pennies - less than \$1,000 a year if you use the higher end of their estimate.

Maybe we shouldn't even give them 11 years. How many tenants are going to die before then? We all know they won't comply until the last possible second and will probably sue and tie this up in court until then.



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How much were those dozens of tenants who died in the 2021 heat dome's lives worth? Not even \$5,000 if MultiFamily Northwest is in charge. Oregon's tenant protection laws have been wholly dictated by soulless ghouls like MFNW for long enough. The Senate has a real chance to be brave here and pass legislation that will save lives and tell Oregon renters that we are people too whose lives are worth more than a few months of rent. Please move SB 54 forward with a do pass recommendation.

Sincerely,  
Alli Sayre  
Portland Tenants United Organizing Committee