

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 722

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

My name is Alli Sayre, and I'm the organizing coordinator of 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 testimony today in support of SB 722, which would ban AI price-fixing algorithms used to illegally set rent prices, as well as lower the new construction exemption for anti price-gouging rent caps from 15 years to seven years.

Tenants across Oregon live in a constant state of fear. Fear that their maintenance requests will be ignored and their housing will be unsafe, fear that they will be retaliated against for submitting maintenance requests in the first place, fear that they will be evicted without cause, and most of all- fear that their rent will be raised beyond their means, forcing an expensive and stressful process of securing new housing.

Every year, Oregon renters are told by their landlords that the "market" dictates that their rent must be increased. Not because of increased costs or taxes but simply the landlord's desire to keep up with everyone else and maximize their profit. Enter companies like RealPage- taking the guesswork out of it and effectively creating a monopoly allowing landlords to raise rents the largest amount the "market" will bear.

Luckily in Oregon we have some protection against this, right? We have a maximum amount rents can be raised in a year, so surely we aren't even affected by this illegal price fixing? Well no... because we have an arbitrary 15 year new construction exemption to our maximum rent increase law.

You're going to hear landlords and developers say lowering 15 years to seven years will somehow stymie development. That's curious, since in some Oregon markets over 30% of them are currently using RealPage to set rent prices. So they're not exactly putting their heads together and hiring actuaries to calculate rent increases every year. They're literally automating it. It follows then, that they probably don't need 15 years to figure out what the rent should be.



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They certainly don't need the ability to raise rents by 87% in one year as Greystar recently did to tenants in a Washington County building.

These two realities simply can't coexist. Landlords can't outsource what some could argue is the only real work they have in their "job" to an algorithm and also claim they need 15 full years to decide how much profit they need to make. Tenants are tired of having to work multiple jobs just to pay their landlord's bills. Please move SB 722 forward with a do-pass recommendation and do not amend it to remove the seven year new construction exemption.

Sincerely,

Alli Sayre
Portland Tenants United Organizing Committee