

Testimony in Support of HB 3974

Dear Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Drazen and Pham, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Shelley Beaulieu, and I am writing to express my **strong support for HB 3974**, which would limit the applicant screening charge that residential landlords may collect to \$20.

As a board member of **Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT)** and a concerned community member of Happy Valley, Oregon, I know firsthand how critical it is to remove financial barriers that prevent people from accessing stable, affordable housing. CAT is Oregon's only statewide, grassroots, tenant-controlled organization working to ensure that all renters have safe, stable, and affordable housing.

Currently, Oregon law allows landlords to charge excessive applicant screening fees, which can be a significant financial burden for renters—particularly those with limited incomes or facing housing instability. Many renters are commonly forced to apply for multiple rental units simultaneously, in our extraordinarily tight rental market. For many renters, paying multiple high screening fees when applying for housing can mean choosing between finding a safe place to live and meeting other basic needs.

HB 3974 would ensure that these fees are fair and affordable, aligning with the true cost of background checks rather than serving as a barrier to housing access. A \$20 cap on applicant screening fees strikes a reasonable balance—ensuring landlords can still recover actual costs while removing an unnecessary and often exploitative financial hurdle for renters.

I urge you to **support HB 3974** to ensure housing access is not impeded by excessive application fees. Thank you for your consideration and for your service to Oregon communities.

Sincerely,

Shelley Beaulieu

Board Member, Community Alliance of Tenants