



The friendliest store in town.

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2004
March 2, 2017

House Committee on Human Services and Housing

Written Testimony Submitted by Sarah Joannides, New Seasons Market

Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice Chairs Stark and Sanchez, and Members of the Committee, for the record, my name is Sarah Joannides and I am the Director of Social Responsibility at New Seasons Market.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of this important legislation that will put an end to unfair no-cause evictions and help keep families in their homes.

At New Seasons Market, we believe that our employees should be able to live and thrive in the neighborhoods where they work, and that customers should be able to afford healthy food and other necessities. Stable, affordable housing is critical to realizing these deeply held values—for our employees and customers, and for all Oregonians.

New Seasons Market has been a mission-driven company since the day we started in Oregon 17 years ago. We've always been committed to offering an industry-leading compensation and benefits package, and we have provided starting wages above the federal and state minimum for more than a decade.

However, in recent years it has become clear that delivering on our mission to support thriving employees and healthy communities will not be possible unless businesses like ours engage at the state level to address the very significant social and economic challenges that we face today.

We came to the state capitol for the first time during the 2016 special session to support raising the minimum wage. In my testimony last year, I shared New Seasons' concern about the rapid increase in the cost of living in Oregon. When our neighbors, customers, and employees can't afford the basics like food, rent, and childcare, it hurts us all.

Raising wages was a critical step toward addressing economic inequality, and I applaud the legislature for your leadership.

This session, I am back on behalf of New Seasons to urge you to take the next step and address the urgent need for stable and secure housing.



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Forty percent of Oregonians rent their home. This means that roughly 1.5 million Oregonians—including seniors, parents, and kids—in our state are potentially vulnerable to unpredictable housing changes. When families are told to leave their homes without a valid reason, it can cause immense financial hardship that can force them to deplete their savings, and in a rental market with very few vacancies, can even push them into homelessness.

It seems like pretty basic business sense, but it's worth saying: if your employees are stressed and worried by uncertainty about where they're going to live—or if they actually lose their homes—workplace productivity will suffer.

Our stores' neighbors are both our employees and our customers. When our neighbors are removed from their homes and can't afford to stay in their community, we feel the impact as a company, and as Oregonians.

No matter who we are, we all need a safe, stable place to call home.

Please end no-cause evictions here in Oregon and help our communities thrive.

Thank you.