

MMC

Metropolitan Mayors' Consortium

Mayor Lacey Beaty

City of Beaverton

Mayor Brian Hodson

City of Canby

Mayor Jeffrey Dalin

City of Cornelius

Mayor Gery Schirado

City of Durham

Mayor Brian Cooper

City of Fairview

Mayor Peter Truax

City of Forest Grove

Mayor Travis Stovall

City of Gresham

Mayor Tom Ellis

City of Happy Valley

Mayor Steve Callaway

City of Hillsboro

Mayor Ken Gibson

City of King City

Mayor Joe Buck

City of Lake Oswego

Mayor Mark Hardie

City of Maywood Park

Mayor Mark Gamba

City of Milwaukie

Mayor Teri Lenahan

City of North Plains

Mayor Rachel Lyles Smith

City of Oregon City

Mayor Ted Wheeler

City of Portland

Mayor Walt Williams

City of Rivergrove

Mayor Keith Mays

City of Sherwood

Mayor Jason Snider

City of Tigard

Mayor Randy Lauer

City of Troutdale

Mayor Frank Bubenik

City of Tualatin

Mayor Anne McEnery-Ogle

City of Vancouver (ex officio)

Mayor Jules Walters

City of West Linn

Mayor Julie Fitzgerald

City of Wilsonville

Mayor Scott Harden

City of Wood Village

Senator Lee Beyer, Co-Chair
Representative Julie Fahey, Co-Chair
Joint Interim Committee on the Second Special Session of 2021
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for Eviction Protection Legislation

Dear Co-Chair Beyer, Co-Chair Fahey and Members of the Committee,

The Metropolitan Mayors' Consortium (MMC) represents the mayors of twenty-five cities in the Portland Metro Area, collectively home to over 1.7 million Oregonians. The MMC writes to express its support for the legislation and funding being considered in the Second Special Session of 2021 that would expand the "safe harbor" provisions protecting Oregonians from eviction.

Housing insecurity is a chronic issue in many MMC cities due to the high cost of housing in the metro region. Homelessness was a mounting problem for MMC cities before COVID-19, and the economic downturn produced by the pandemic has further increased the number of households vulnerable to homelessness. The economic hardships of COVID-19 have also disproportionately affected the low-income Oregonians and communities of color who were already struggling to make ends meet.

Unfortunately, our state's existing housing and homelessness crisis is on the precipice of becoming even more severe. Over 30,000 households are currently awaiting rental assistance, and the safe harbor provisions protecting them from eviction have either already expired or will expire soon. As mayors, we do not want to see our residents evicted for nonpayment while they wait for their rent assistance applications to be processed. For this reason, we ask the Legislature to take the following actions to protect tenants in our cities:

- Provide new funding for continuing access to rent assistance for tenants with low-income through the winter months until new federal resources are available, and for the landlord guarantee fund.
- Modify SB 278's safe harbor period to cover the entire application period, and extend the sunset on protections.
- Extend the sunset on the current 10-day (as opposed to 72 hour) notice period for nonpayment evictions, coupled with updated notice to tenants about eviction process and where to find rent assistance.
- Expand and extend the current 60-day landlord guarantee fund to cover any period of time (not just 60 days) if a landlord delays eviction and a tenant is ultimately denied assistance or receives less than is owed when the case is closed.

The mayors of the MMC are gravely concerned about housing stability in our communities. Oregon has the third highest rate of unsheltered youth in the country, and local shelters are already straining at the seams. We believe that the State should employ every tool at its disposal to keep people in their homes and avoid the trauma and risk of homelessness that accompanies eviction. For this reason, the MMC urges the Legislature to support the safe harbor policy and funding provisions being considered in this Special Session.

Thank you for your leadership and your consideration of our testimony.

Sincerely,

Pete Truax
Mayor, Forest Grove
Chair, The Metropolitan Mayors' Consortium