

December 10, 2021

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

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

The City of Gresham urges the Legislature enact needed tenant protections and additional funding critical for our residents during this period of crisis.

We have the opportunity to deliver on the promises made during the 2021 session to ensure that no one is unduly evicted while they seek rent assistance. Many of Gresham’s renters and landlords have depended on relief afforded through legislation, and the City encourages further investment to protect our residents.

Black and Indigenous Oregonians and Oregon communities of color have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID pandemic, have needed to seek rent assistance at higher rates, and are at greater risk of eviction. This is particularly true in the City of Gresham, which is one of the most diverse communities in the state of Oregon. Unfortunately, Gresham has also been one of the most COVID-impacted communities in all of Oregon, and our residents have been particularly affected by continued economic challenges.

We ask the Legislature to pass the following:

- 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. Tenants who have applied for assistance should be protected until their application has been considered, and either granted or denied, no matter when they apply.
- 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. This is a common-sense provision that works to facilitate access to available resources designed to prevent displacement.
- 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. This removes risk for the landlord in ensuring tenant stability and access to assistance.

No one should be evicted for nonpayment while their rent assistance application is being processed. We must act now to prevent the unnecessary and tragic generational harm that comes from eviction and displacement by seizing the opportunity to provide critical relief and prevent this housing crisis from getting worse.

The City of Gresham urges you to protect residents from eviction by enacting the housing safe harbor policy and funding provisions being considered during the Second Special Session of 2021.

Sincerely,



Brian Monberg
Government Relations Manager