



Co-chair Beyer, Co-chair Fahey, and members of the committee thank you for the opportunity to speak today in favor of the LC 9. For the record, my name is Tim Morris, Executive Director of the Springfield Eugene Tenant Association. SETA is a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering and advocating for tenants in our community and we operate two major programs. Our first program is that we run a free Tenant Hotline that connects any renter who has questions or concerns with their tenancy with resources and information. Our second program is direct outreach to renter households who have pending non-payment evictions in court to ensure they have done all they can to access resources and information available to them.

I share what our programs are with you because I want to emphasize my point: It is absolutely imperative that you support additional renter protections and funding, otherwise thousands of Oregonians will very soon be without a home. Our on-the-ground data shows us that non-payment evictions filed in Lane County court have doubled the moment the rent assistance dollars were no longer available. We see every single day those most vulnerable in our community, including students, senior citizens, families with children, LGBTQIA+, and BIPOC communities that have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Economically, renter households have been unequally affected by the pandemic. Even with reports of unemployment rates dropping, initial gains in income cannot make up for how far behind low-income and vulnerable communities fell during the emergency period. It is going to take time for working people to pay off debt accrued when they had no income and get stable.

Without further direct intervention from the State of Oregon, we are condemning the most vulnerable among us to be removed from their homes and without any other option than our already overburdened streets.

Furthermore, throughout this pandemic, we have seen the dangers of arbitrarily choosing a specific day when renter protections will end. Not once during this emergency period has this been successful or supportive to anyone and has only caused harm. COVID-19, and the economic impacts of the pandemic, will not simply end because we have chosen a day at random when protections will end. Renters need to have the security of assured protections to stay safe in their homes. We recommend removing the dates set for the Safe Harbor protections and the 10-day notice of nonpayment requirement. No tenant should be evicted while applying for rent assistance.

It is the strong opinion of the Springfield Eugene Tenant Association that the Oregon State Legislature must take immediate action in passing LC 9 with amendments to remove arbitrary timeframes to prevent a catastrophic wave of evictions that has already begun to happen.



Respectfully submitted,

Tim Morris

Timothy Morris, on behalf of the SETA Board of Directors

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