



# **community alliance of tenants**

To: Housing Committee  
Re: LC 9  
Date:12/11/2021

Dear Co-chair Senator Lee Beyer, Co-chair Representative Julie Fahey, Co-Vice Chair Senator Tim Knoop, Co-Vice Chair Representative Kim Wallen and committee members:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT). CAT is Oregon's only statewide, grassroots, tenant-controlled, tenant-rights organization. CAT supports the policies in LC9 because it contains policy that is critical to stopping completely preventable evictions due to application backlogs and adds needed funds to reduce the unpaid rent. As CAT and other advocates have requested, it retains the extended ten-day notice period for non-payment eviction paired with the roughly \$215 million of new Emergency Rent Assistance and importantly it removes the deadline on the Safe Harbor period for those who have applied for rent assistance.

This will help people who applied for assistance but could leave out many that also need the help. We ask that you reconsider the proposed June 2022 sunset because when additional promised federal funds arrive, we will have the same mismatch of a resource that maynot be distributed before eviction notices are issued. If there must be a date, choose June 2023, when the State is sure to have both secured and distributed any new federal emergency rental assistance and both landlords and tenants have more certainty. I know that many who have suffered economically from loss of income due to COVID have not applied yet, but need the help and protection that they were promised. I know this from the people calling CAT for advice, from the volunteers that advise us, and from friends currently facing eviction. From our vantage point it felt that last month we were just starting to reach the Black and Brown People, Immigrants and Refugees in the numbers that we predicted needed help, when the program was shut down.



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CAT has been asking for stronger renter protections since before the moratorium expired this summer. We feel a strong disappointment that the legislature and the governor have not stood up for longer term protection for renters, because whenever we have rent assistance available, we should never allow an eviction for nonpayment. Not today, not ever. We have learned from the pandemic that housing is a human right and necessary for public health. The rent hikes, rising costs for everything, increasing harassment, uncounted evictions and evictions where 35% of the cases resulted in negative outcomes even for tenants eligible for rent assistance, shows that we need additional protections specific to today's conditions.

CAT members have been sharing the following solutions:

- A moratorium on evictions, including no-cause evictions, for all Oregon tenants until June of 2023.
- Reducing annual rent increases to no more than 3% above the consumer inflation rate until at least 2023 or our economy stabilizes from this inflationary period.
- Using state funding resources as a bridge until more federal rent assistance is offered.
- Imposing a penalty on landlords who threaten eviction or evict tenants during the moratorium, allowing tenants to sue for 3x the rent.
- Providing compensation to tenants evicted for non-payment to cover the cost of moving, deposits, items lost in eviction, etc.
- Using low-barrier attestation as the primary method for all applicants for rental assistance, reducing complications and moving money out the door quickly.
- Resolving to create a permanent housing safety net system for Oregon.

So, as you vote on this bill, please be aware that while it is necessary, it is only the bare minimum to be done for renters at this time. We were hopeful more might come out of this special session, but we are not finished advocating for the work that will still need to be done.

Sincerely,

Kim McCarty  
Executive Director,



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