



December 11, 2021

Co-Chairs Fahey and Beyer, Co-Vice Chairs Knopp and Wallan, and Members of the Committee:

As an association of 15 member denominations and over 150 congregations, faith-based organizations, and interfaith partners, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) works with people of faith and people of goodwill to improve the lives of Oregonians through housing and other direct service programs, dialogue and advocacy.

**EMO strongly supports LC 9, which would ensure that individuals and families will not be evicted while waiting for state and federal rent assistance to reach their landlord.** In the 2021 session, SB 278, a similar effort, passed with broad bipartisan support, but overwhelming demand necessitates statutory changes for the government to keep its promise of relief to thousands of households.

More than 7,900 low-income Oregon households have had their safe harbor period expire while waiting for rent assistance, leaving them with no legal protection from eviction.<sup>1</sup> Since SB 278's safe harbor protections began, nearly 2,300 nonpayment evictions have been filed in Oregon courts, increasing the risk of homelessness, particularly for Oregon's communities of color.<sup>2</sup>

We urge passage of LC 9 to strengthen the framework set out by SB 278. LC 9 will protect low-income Oregonians and remove risk for landlords by providing renewed funding for continued access to rent assistance, extending the safe harbor period to cover the entire application period, extending the sunset on the current 10-day notice period for nonpayment evictions, and expanding and extending the landlord guarantee fund.

EMO's support for housing protections stems from both our experience operating four housing-related programs for marginalized communities and our commitment to justice.

As a community of faith, we proclaim that our state has a moral imperative to keep our neighbors in housing. Evicting someone who has done everything right is simply unfair, and we urge the Legislature to act now to prevent eviction and displacement.

Thank you for your consideration of this essential measure.

The Rev. Andrea Cano  
Interim President, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

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<sup>1</sup> OHCS News Release 12/8/21

<sup>2</sup> Data from Oregon Law Center Eviction Defense Project; OHA COVID-19 Weekly Report, Dec. 1 2021, OHCS Dashboard