



December 10, 2021

Subject: Support for rental assistance policy in LC 9.

Co-Chair Beyer, Co-Chair Fahey, Co-Vice Chair Knopp, Co-Vice Chair Wallan, Members of the Committee,

For the record my name is Coua Xiong and I am writing on behalf of APANO, and undersigned organizations, to support the rental assistance policy in the Housing Safe Harbor Bill (LC 9).

APANO unites Asian and Pacific Islanders to build power, develop leaders, and advance equity through organizing, advocacy, cultural work, and community development. We are committed to building a just world where communities have the power, resources, and voice to determine our own futures.

APANO supported SB 278 in the 2021 session and it's purpose of ensuring Oregonians remain housed and protected from eviction while they wait for federal and state rental assistance. This priority has not changed for us, especially as COVID-19 is still disproportionately impacting BIPOC communities and especially as we have seen the significant barriers to navigating the rental assistance process. The application was not created with BIPOC communities in mind and required significantly more navigation support than was provided by the state, which resulted in increased housing instability.

We urge you to keep the promise of eviction protection by passing 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.

More than 7,900 low-income households who have applied for assistance to maintain their housing stability and pay off rent debt that accrued during the financial crisis of the pandemic have been waiting so long, their safe harbor period has expired and they have no legal



protection from eviction. This is a result of the lack of investment and capacity from the state for rental assistance processes, which we must be accountable for to ensure continued access to rent assistance in the coming months, and to prevent the generational harm caused by displacement while payments are being made.

We urge you to support the rental assistance policy in the Housing Safe Harbor Bill (LC 9).

Sincerely,

Coua Xiong, Interim Advocacy and Civic Engagement Director

Supporting organizations:
Micronesian Islander Community