

Date: April 6, 2021  
Re: Concern about SB 330

Chair Jama, Vice Chair Linthicum, and Members of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development,

As a concerned Oregon voter and taxpayer, I am writing to request you pause in considering SB 330.

SB 330 attempts to address a serious problem, in trying to prevent evictions. This effort is laudable. But as it is written, SB 330 has serious flaws.

We want to prevent evictions and keep people safely housed. We want to help Oregonians in need, whether tenants or landlords, but we don't want to use taxpayer funds to ensure high profit margins for private landlords, especially out-of-state real estate trusts.

The Oregon Center for Public Policy identifies some serious concerns with SB 330: "Unfortunately, this new tax credit fails to target help at the landlords or tenants in greatest need, while issuing a blank check that could cost all Oregonians dearly in the years to come. It could also cut back on federal rent assistance used in Oregon, while also potentially reducing federal aid from the newly enacted stimulus package."

As Tax Fairness Oregon notes, "the legislature has established a means of meeting the need through HB 4401. Whatever the flaws in the system it established, they should be addressed by amendment, not by calling upon another state agency, the Department of Revenue, to administer a second program."

This is a unique moment for Oregon, and should be seen as a chance for transformation of our shared values: that we invest not in propping up the status quo but in supporting those most in need. It only makes sense that taxpayer-funded relief be targeted at Oregonians who most need the help. There may be good news for the state budget and the boon of a federal stimulus on its way, but this is not a reason to be profligate with taxpayer funds.

Fiscal conservatives and social progressives should be able to agree that this is still a time for careful stewardship of state taxes.

Thank you for the consideration of this important issue. I urge you to consider carefully whether SB 330 is a measure that helps set Oregon on the right path as we recover from the COVID housing crisis.

Sincerely,  
Audrey Zunkel-deCoursey