

To: Chair Jama, Vice Chair Anderson, and members of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development

From: Jane Stackhouse, Portland

Date: February 2, 2022

I urge a YES on SB1536 Relating to Indoor Temperature Control, Declaring an Emergency.

Last summer during the June heat dome event nearly 100 people died due to the heat¹. Analysis by the Medical Examiner determined factors that contributed to people's deaths. It found that most of those who died were older, lived alone and had no working air conditioning. The type of housing people lived in was also a clear factor in the danger posed by the heat: more than half of the people who died lived in apartments or multifamily units. Eight of the fatalities were people living in mobile home parks, and two were homeless, living in cars.²

The heat dome is directly related to climate change, each summer being hotter than the last. Although we may not break the new record of 116 degrees in Portland this year, we must expect and plan for a recurrence. We have a responsibility to our neighbors.

SB1536 establishes a right to cooling just as landlords are required to provide a safe source of heat. The prohibition of air conditioners may have been reasonable before our climate changed to the extent it has. Now we must adapt. I appreciate that the bill applies to all rentals and home owner associations that may restrict air conditioners. The option to provide a cool common space when the multifamily building is not capable of supporting air conditioners, although not ideal, is a reasonable option for those buildings that cannot be upgraded to support air conditioners.

I am very enthusiastic about the provisions to help expand the use heat pumps for cooling (and heating). The grants are essential to provide rebates and \$10 to 15 million for heat pump rebates and \$5 million for required associated construction and mechanical work will help incentivize installation of heat pumps.

I installed a ducted heat pump system in my owner-occupied duplex built in 1925. I had already upgraded my electrical and insulated heavily. I contacted Energy Trust of Oregon for advice on contractors and to check on tax credits. Because I was switching from methane gas to electricity, no tax credits were available. I was able to refinance my duplex and convert both units to ducted heat pump HVAC systems as well as installing heat pump hot water tanks, electric induction ranges and electric fireplaces. My tenant

¹ <https://www.opb.org/article/2021/08/06/oregon-june-heat-wave-deaths-names-revealed-medical-examiner/>

² https://multco-web7-psh-files-usw2.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/preliminary_review-heat_deaths-07-14-21_2.pdf

and I were comfortable indoors during the 2020 wildfire smoke and the 2021 heat dome and the cold snap this winter.

I am aware that not all property owners have the resources or the personal motivation I had to move to heat pump technology. The rebates will provide incentives and more homes will have energy efficient heat pump HVAC systems. My electric system is powered by Pacific Power's Blue Sky clean electricity. I see this as the best way to stop the root cause of extreme heat dome events.

I understand there are some amendments proposed to SB1536, assuming these are in line with the intent of the bill, I ask that you pass and refer to Ways and Means with a 'do pass' recommendation.