



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Testimony in Support for SB 1536

February 2, 2022

Chair Jama, Vice Chair Anderson and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Khanh Pham, Oregon State Representative for House District 46. I am honored to testify in support of SB 1536, Renters' Right to Cooling, an opportunity for us to ensure that our state's most vulnerable populations are able to maintain livable temperatures in their homes.

My district, HD46, includes areas like Lents Town Center, which have some of the lowest tree canopy densities in the city, which combined with asphalt roads leads to deadly urban heat islands. Portland State University Professor Vivek Shandas' research shows that temperatures at Lents Town Center, in my district, can be up to 25 degrees hotter than other, cooler, usually wealthier parts of the city of Portland, and 9 degrees hotter than the city average.

Climate change is causing more of these extreme heat events, and access to cooling devices is a life or death issue, as this past summer of 2021 showed us. Over 100 people in Oregon died in last summer's extreme heat dome events, and lack of access to air conditioning was the key factor in these deaths.

SB 1536 is a necessary policy to build our resilience to the more frequent heat waves of a rapidly warming climate. Access to personal air conditioning units are life-saving, and we need to protect and expand access to cooling, particularly for renters who have more restrictions on their ability to create a habitable environment for their families.

The passing of SB 1536 has the potential to significantly reduce the number of preventable deaths from the next extreme heat wave which we know is coming.

I urge members of the committee to support SB 1536.