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Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Scott Smith, and I am writing on behalf of LandWise in strong support of **SB 1523**, legislation designed to bridge the digital divide for tenants and remove unnecessary electronic barriers to housing stability.

As housing systems increasingly rely on digital tools, it is critical that progress does not unintentionally exclude those who lack access to, or comfort with, technology. For many Oregonians—particularly seniors, renters with disabilities, and low-income households—digital-only systems can create real obstacles to meeting basic needs, including securing and maintaining housing.

SB 1523 establishes reasonable, commonsense protections for a digital age by ensuring tenants retain access to non-digital options that have long been standard practice. These include:

- Maintaining the option to pay rent by check or another commercially reasonable method. Tenants should not be required to use electronic portals that may be difficult to navigate, inaccessible on mobile devices, subject to technical failures, or burdened with additional fees. Even minor errors in a digital system can have serious consequences for housing stability.
- Preserving the option of a paper housing application. Digital applications can be challenging or impossible for individuals without reliable internet access or appropriate devices. Allowing paper applications ensures equal opportunity to apply for housing.
- Ensuring access to essential facilities through non-digital entry options. App-based access systems require up-to-date smartphones, which approximately ten percent of Oregonians do not have—and the percentage is significantly higher among seniors. Tenants must be able to access essential facilities such as laundry, parking, trash, and recycling through physical keys, keypads, or key fobs, just as this legislature has already required for unit entry.

According to Pew Research, one in four adults over the age of 65 does not own a smartphone. SB 1523 directly addresses this reality by preserving existing, low-cost systems already used by many landlords and property managers. These solutions are budget-neutral, practical, and effective.

By removing avoidable barriers to housing access and stability, SB 1523 provides meaningful protection for the most vulnerable renters while promoting fairness and inclusion across Oregon's housing system.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge your support for SB 1523. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your continued service to Oregon communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Scott M. Smith". The signature is stylized, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Scott Smith
LandWise LLC