



OREGON SENATE DEMOCRATS

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Emergency Heat Relief Legislation Passed by Senate Democrats

Senate Bill 1536 will help vulnerable Oregonians stay safe during severe weather events

SALEM – Today, the Senate approved [Senate Bill 1536](#) on a vote of 23 to 4. This legislation eases barriers to renters accessing portable cooling devices and heat relief during severe weather events. Nearly [100 Oregonians died](#) from hyperthermia during the late-June heat dome last summer and more than 500 deaths in the NW region encompassing Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Canada.

“In the summer of 2021, Oregon experienced a record heat wave, the 2nd worst natural disaster in our state’s recorded history,” said [Senator Kayse Jama](#) (D-Portland), Chair of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development, who co-carried Senate Bill 1536 on the Senate floor. “Most people who passed away were seniors, people with disabilities, or people with underlying medical conditions. Senate Bill 1536 will protect more Oregonians by removing barriers to installing lifesaving devices.”

Senate Bill 1536 limits restrictions on portable cooling devices in residences by landlords, homeowners associations, condominium associations and local governments and directs the Oregon Health Authority to create a program to acquire air conditions and filters for distribution on an emergency basis to eligible individuals. The measure also sets requirements for new residential rental units to provide adequate cooling facilities, creates a grant program at the Oregon Department of Energy to provide assistance for purchasing and installing heat pumps, expands the Oregon Department of Human Service’s grant program for emergency shelters, among other changes.

“Extreme heat is becoming a serious public health crisis in Oregon, particularly for seniors and other vulnerable folks,” said [Senator Deb Patterson](#) (D-Salem), Chair of the Senate Committee on Health Care, who spoke in support of Senate Bill 1536 on the Senate floor. “We are working to prevent tragedies ahead by taking action on this emergency heat relief bill today. Today’s vote is another example of Oregonians stepping up for each other when it is most needed.”

In addition to reducing barriers for renters accessing lifesaving cooling devices, Senate Bill 1536 includes a \$2 million appropriation for the Department of Human Services to provide grants for emergency shelters for clean air, warming or cooling.

“Climate-driven weather extremes are causing severe dangers for folks around our state,” said [Senator Jeff Golden](#) (D-Ashland), Chair of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery, who co-carried Senate Bill 1536 on the Senate floor. “Wildfire smoke is already causing significant issues for many communities around Oregon. In addition to emergency heat relief, Senate Bill 1536 includes much needed support for clean air shelters, helping to close a troublesome gap in our statewide wildfire response.”

Senate Bill 1536 now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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