



PRESS RELEASE

OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

For Immediate Release

March 3, 2022

Press Contact:

Hannah Kurowski

hannah.kurowski@oregonlegislature.gov

Legislature Passes Bill to Provide Emergency Heat Relief

Senate Bill 1536 will expand access to cooling for low-income Oregonians after last year's deadly heat wave

SALEM, Ore. – Today, the Oregon House approved [Senate Bill 1536 C](#), the Emergency Heat Relief Act, on a 49-9 vote. The bipartisan bill will invest in air conditioning, air filters, and cooling centers for Oregonians vulnerable to extreme heat.

“As Oregon experiences hotter summers and changing conditions, we need to make sure people have access to the cooling options they need to stay safe,” said [Rep. Pam Marsh](#) (D-Southern Jackson County). “This bill prepares our state for extreme weather and protects the health and safety of vulnerable Oregonians.”

In June 2021, record temperatures during the Pacific Northwest “heat dome” led to the deaths of [at least 96 Oregonians](#) and caused suffering for many more. Most of those who died had no working air conditioning or other cooling technology.

“Most people who passed away were seniors, people with disabilities, or people with underlying medical conditions, especially those living in upper-level multifamily units or manufactured homes,” said [Sen. Kayse Jama](#) (D-Portland), who carried the bill on the Senate floor. “To help protect more families, we must remove barriers to installing these appliances and incentivize the most efficient and effective devices.”

SB 1536 increases access to portable cooling devices in residences under the control of landlords, homeowners associations, condominium associations and local governments. It sets requirements for new residential rental units to provide adequate cooling and creates a grant program at the Oregon Department of Energy to provide assistance for purchasing and installing heat and cooling pumps.

The bill also takes steps to prepare Oregon communities for extreme weather, creating a program to distribute air conditioners and filters to vulnerable people on an

emergency basis and expanding a grant program to support emergency shelters that provide shelter in case of poor air quality or extreme heat or cold.

Organizations including [Coalition of Communities of Color](#), [Verde](#), [Community Alliance of Tenants](#), and [Rogue Climate](#) played an important role in advocating for this legislation.

SB 1536 passed the state Senate 22-5 yesterday. It now heads to the Governor for consideration.

###