



OREGON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

December 13, 2021

Oregon State Capitol
255 Capitol St NE
Salem, OR 97310

Dear Secretary of State Shemia Fagan,

As chairs of the respective Housing Committees in the Oregon House and Senate, we write today to request a performance audit of Oregon Housing and Community Services and the entities partnering with the agency to distribute emergency rental assistance funds, including community action agencies and the third party vendor used for statewide processing.

We understand the enormous and unprecedented pressure that was placed on OHCS to get these funds out to support renters impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and we appreciate the work that was done in the last few months. We're also grateful that Oregon has been one of the top 10 states in the country in terms of the speed of delivering federal emergency rental assistance.

However, we remain deeply troubled by the inconsistent results across counties, by technical difficulties with the Allita software, by what appears to be a lack of clear communication to renters and landlords, and above all, by the fact that more than 8,000 Oregonians are facing eviction at the time of our December special session because their application process has exceeded the statutory safe harbor period.

When the Oregon Legislature passed—on a near unanimous vote—Senate Bill 278 during the 2021 legislative session, we did so on the belief that we were providing OHCS and community partners sufficient time to pay applications in the queue. For thousands of Oregonians across the state, they have instead received delay after delay. No matter the reason, this is unacceptable for the thousands living in fear they could lose their housing despite applying to the state for help.

As a state, we have an obligation to hold agencies accountable for how they implement programs and deliver services — especially when implementation problems could lead to such a potentially tragic result for so many Oregonians. The first step in that process is a



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formal performance audit that will uncover any missteps so that we can prevent challenges like this in the future and better serve Oregonians in need.

We are available to answer clarifying questions and look forward to the results of this audit.

Sincerely,

Representative Julie Fahey
Chair, House Committee on Housing

Senator Kayse Jama
Chair, Senate Committee on Housing and Development