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City of Portland

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Memo: Endorsement of the Climate & Health Standards policy
Date: August 21, 2026
From: Sustainability and Climate Commission
To: Members of the Portland City Council, Mayor, and City Administrator

The Sustainability and Climate Commission endorses the proposed Climate & Health Standards and recommends that the Portland City Council advance the policy. The Commission reached this endorsement after briefings from Councilor Avalos's office, City staff, and community partners, participation in public engagement, and review of the policy's principal provisions. The proposal reflects more than six years of sustained work by community organizations, renters, researchers, technical experts, and City leaders. The Commission identifies the following core strengths:

- **Provides renters with information about energy use and health impacts of a housing unit before signing a lease.** Required disclosure of utility costs, cooling access, gas appliances, and ventilation would give prospective tenants a clearer understanding of a unit's likely operating costs and indoor conditions. These are consequential factors in household affordability, comfort, and health that renters have not consistently been able to evaluate in advance.
- **Integrates building decarbonization with tenant protections.** The proposal recognizes that improving building performance and reducing emissions must proceed alongside safeguards for housing stability. This integration strengthens the policy by addressing environmental and housing objectives together rather than treating them as competing priorities.
- **Includes concrete anti-displacement measures.** Where required upgrades temporarily affect occupancy, the policy provides for temporary housing or relocation assistance, moving and storage support, and a guaranteed right to return. These provisions help ensure that compliance does not result in the loss of a tenant's home.
- **Uses a long implementation period supported by economic analysis.** Findings from the City's pilot and the ECONorthwest study indicate that the extended compliance runway gives building owners time to plan, coordinate improvements, and manage costs. This supports the policy's expectation that compliance costs should not be passed directly to tenants.
- **Builds upon and closes gaps in the state standard.** Portland's proposed 20,000-square-foot threshold would cover more buildings than Oregon's forthcoming 35,000-square-foot Tier 1 standard, extending performance requirements to properties the state program alone would not reach.

By contributing to building decarbonization accountability, this policy will help Portland reach its 2050 net-zero goals, improve energy savings and reduce costs, improve the health and resilience of homes and buildings and the people who live and work in them.

The Commission recognizes that a maximum indoor temperature standard is not included in the current proposal and supports its future consideration as a complementary separate policy and next step.

This Commission is charged with providing independent, timely, and actionable advice on Portland's climate and sustainability policies. This endorsement reflects that responsibility and the Commission's cross-sector expertise.

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