



WASHINGTON'S TRUSTED RESOURCE EMPOWERING HOUSING PROVIDERS

Coalition Statement to the Spokane City Council

Re: Proposed Renters' Right to Cooling Ordinance (SMC 10.57.175)

March 2026

Dear Council President Wilkerson and Members of the Spokane City Council,

As industry professionals and members of our community, the undersigned organizations collectively represent thousands of rental housing units in the City of Spokane. We share the Council's commitment to tenant health and safety. Which is why we respectfully ask the Council to allow the tenant protections and rights of Engrossed Senate Bill 6200 to take effect before attempting to address these issues. ESB 6200 went through a rigorous stakeholder process and addresses the core issue of the proposed ordinance.

The State Has Already Solved This Issue

ESB 6200, which has passed both chambers of the Legislature with bipartisan support and been delivered to the Governor, now establishes a statewide framework ensuring all tenants may install and use portable cooling devices of their choosing. It is the best way to protect tenants from unhealthy heat levels. ESB 6200 puts the power directly in the hands of tenants to select and install cooling solutions that work best for their homes, their budgets, and their families—without requiring landlord permission or costly building-wide retrofits.

ESB 6200 will become effective well before temperatures reach concerning levels in Spokane, giving residents ample time to prepare.

Spokane's Affordable Housing Stock Cannot Absorb This Mandate

The median construction year for housing in Spokane is 1961. Approximately 61% of rental units were built before 1980. This housing stock typically lacks central ductwork and has electrical panels insufficient for significant added cooling load. However, these are Spokane's naturally occurring affordable housing units, the homes that low-income tenants and participants in housing assistance programs depend on.

This housing stock is not incidental to Spokane's safety net. It is the safety net. Rapid rehousing programs, Housing Choice Voucher placements, and other publicly funded housing interventions rely on the availability of private-market units at accessible price points. A mandate that renders a significant share of this inventory non-compliant does not protect vulnerable residents—it reduces the housing available to them.

The ordinance also creates a potential fire safety conflict. Many older units have only a single opening window per bedroom, which serves as required fire egress. Installing a window-mounted cooling unit in that opening renders the unit non-compliant with fire code. The ordinance as drafted does not address this conflict, placing housing providers in the position of violating one safety requirement to satisfy another.

A Better Path Forward

ESB 6200 was drafted with cities like Spokane in mind. It empowers tenants to choose their own cooling solutions, protects their right to install portable units without landlord interference, and will take effect well before summer temperatures arrive. Tenants who use portable cooling units can take those units with them when they move, ensuring access to cooling across the housing market, including in buildings where building-wide retrofits are not feasible.

If the City wishes to further support tenants in accessing cooling, we would welcome a conversation about a subsidy program to assist residents in purchasing portable cooling devices as a direct investment in tenant welfare that avoids the unintended consequences of this mandate.

We are open to continued collaboration on housing-related issues, and we value our relationship with the Council. We respectfully ask that the Council rely on ESB 6200 and the existing portable cooling ordinance as the appropriate path forward.

Respectfully,

Signed:

Sean Flynn/President & Executive Director

Name / Title

Emilie Cameron/President & CEO

Name / Title

Titus Hug/President

Name / Title

Jake Mayson/GA Director

Name / Title

Lee McIntyre/President

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Tisha Goodman/General Manager

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Chris Batton/Designated Broker

Name / Title

Bryan Gwynn/Designated Broker

Name / Title

Tom Clark/Realtor & Broker

Name / Title

Gordon Hester/President & CEO

Name / Title

Ryan Lewis/President

Name / Title

Rental Housing Association of Washington

Organization

Downtown Spokane Partnership

Organization

Spokane Association of Homebuilders

Organization

Washington Multi-Family Housing Association

Organization

Spokane Realtors

Organization

Rockwood Property Management

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RenCorp Realty

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Urban Settlements

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