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I-5 ROSE QUARTER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT - NO MORE FREEWAYS
PDX PUBLIC HEARING

HEARING

**HELD BY VIDEOCONFERENCE
TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2023**

**HARRIET TUBMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL
2231 NORTH FLINT AVENUE
PORTLAND, OREGON 97227**

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HEARING

HELD BY VIDEOCONFERENCE

TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2023

MR. BROWN: Good evening.

THE AUDIENCE: Hi.

MR. BROWN: Welcome to People's Public Hearing on the proposed \$1.4 billion Rose Quarter freeway expansion in the (inaudible) at Harriet Tubman Middle School.

My name is Aaron Brown. I use he/him pronouns, and I organize with No More Freeways.

Tonight we are going to air our community concerns against the Oregon Department of Transportation's proposal to widen I-5 to the Albina neighborhood. I think everyone's already aware this event is being livestreamed, so you can go watch probably greatest hits a little bit later this evening. And this video will be submitted as testimony for the public comment period, which ends tomorrow. We're going to talk about that in a moment.

First, real quick, we've got bathrooms that are around the corner up by the food. The food is up that way. Robins from the Sunrise teams have

1 been doing great on the sign-in when you walked in.
2 If you haven't already signed in, please do. And
3 that's where you can sign up to testify. We've got
4 a handful of folks already signed up.

5 And if you showed up thinking I -- I don't
6 want to speak, well, this is your chance to really
7 talk about how you really feel. So I hope
8 throughout the evening and hearing some of the facts
9 and stuff we're putting out, I hope you feel
10 inspired to speak up and say something.

11 Throughout this event, we also, in the
12 back corner, Viv (phonetic), our team and the
13 postcards. We have postcards that you can write to
14 Secretary Pete Buttigieg, to Governor-elect Tina
15 Kotek -- how awesome is that to say -- for Governor-
16 elect Tina Kotek and to hand off to ODOT. And so if
17 you want to just write your message, we would love
18 for you to do that as well.

19 Everyone should have gotten a -- or many
20 folks when they walked in got a Post-it note. If
21 you didn't, you can go get one up front.

22 And throughout the course of the evening,
23 either after you give testimony or during someone
24 giving really good testimony, we would like you to
25 write your name on the postcard and this -- this

1 visual aid we've established up here, "Should ODOT
2 conduct an environmental impact statement?" And
3 throughout the evening, if you think the answer is,
4 yes, they should, you can go and put your Post- it
5 here. And if throughout the evening, you think, no,
6 I trust ODOT, there, you can put your Post-it on
7 this side.

8 And the final note, you'll notice on all
9 of the things that are on the tables, we've got a
10 little QR code. That takes you to No More Freeways
11 website where you can submit online written comment,
12 which will go until midnight tomorrow. So if you
13 haven't, I see many people in here that I know have
14 already written some comments. And if you haven't,
15 I know you're getting ready to do so the next day.
16 Please share the link widely.

17 However, any universe of friends and
18 roommates and neighbors and colleagues that you
19 think would be willing to put their name on the
20 line, even just one or two words about it really
21 makes a difference.

22 I'm going to give a quick overview, and
23 then we're going to get going with testimony. So
24 you don't have to listen to me all much anymore,
25 right?

1 Where are we now? Well, we are on lands
2 that were stolen as recently as 170 years ago, the
3 Multnomah and Cathlamet, Clackamas, Chinook,
4 Tualatin Kalapuya, and Molalla Tribes. All lived in
5 this land before white people showed up. This is a
6 very abbreviated history.

7 Decades of racist planning led to Albina,
8 where you're standing today, become the largest
9 Black neighborhood in the State of Oregon. In the
10 1950s, there were 365 homes, approximately,
11 destroyed by urban growth schemes. And of those, a
12 total of approximately 450 were destroyed by ODOT in
13 the construction of Interstate Avenue to where the
14 yellow line is today, I-5, and the Kirby Avenue
15 offramp on the Fremont Bridge.

16 This process of (inaudible) was
17 deliberate. It was (inaudible) Black community to
18 divide and destroy the neighborhood and added
19 significant air pollution, noise pollution, and car
20 traffic through a community already struggling with
21 economic disinvestment, redlining, drugs, and racist
22 law enforcement and over-policing.

23 This wasn't accidental or unique. Flush
24 with (inaudible) and local racist leadership eager
25 to displace peoples of color, similar freeway

1 projects decimated Black and Brown communities in
2 dozens of other cities in America, from Miami to St.
3 Paul, from Tulsa to Los Angeles.

4 The building that you are sitting in here
5 today was opened in the 1950s before the freeway was
6 established. Tubman served as a major Black
7 institution for the Albina neighborhood and was the
8 site of numerous protests in the 1980s as the Black
9 community fought Portland Public Schools' efforts to
10 relocate the school through the desegregation
11 initiatives.

12 The school was closed for a few decades
13 but reopened in 2018. When it did reopen, Portland
14 Public Schools had to spend \$20 million on the air
15 purifiers that are above this roof that we're --
16 above the roof where we're sitting today. But
17 that's \$20 million that could have been going into -
18 - also into other education initiatives. But for
19 Portland Public Schools to reopen this building,
20 they had to invest in the air purifiers. And even
21 that doesn't change the fact that the air
22 immediately outside this building is some of the
23 worst in the entire State of Oregon. So please keep
24 your masks on after you go outside. You might
25 appreciate that.

1 And by the way, I think everyone's got the
2 memo. Please wear your masks when you're standing
3 out there. If -- when you're willing to testify, if
4 you're willing to take your mask off when
5 testifying, we're totally cool with that. We really
6 appreciate everybody wearing masks and keeping our
7 community safe and making sure everyone can be here
8 today that wants to.

9 So that's the history of the neighborhood.
10 How did we get to right here? Well, in 2017, the
11 legislature passed, and Governor Brown signed House
12 Bill 2017, which allocated, among other things, \$450
13 million. They said at the time this project would
14 cost under half a million dollars. It's now about
15 \$1.5 billion.

16 They allocated \$450 million for this
17 project. And No More Freeways founded in August of
18 2017. Shoutout to Chris Smith. He's the guy that
19 let you into the building.

20 **(Applause.)**

21 **MR. BROWN:** The last rally like this we
22 did was Chris's birthday. I don't know if folks
23 remember we had to sing Happy Birthday to him. That
24 was fun. And now we're applauding for him, and he's
25 not even in the room.

1 Chris sent the email and asked everybody
2 to come (inaudible). Hey, who wants to fight this
3 freeway? And a bunch of community leaders, many of
4 you have been in this event over the last weeks and
5 months and years. And I am just personally so
6 grateful that people continue to show up and
7 articulate that climate leaders don't widen
8 freeways.

9 No More Freeways formed in August of 2017.
10 Our first event was at City Hall where we rallied
11 for the comprehensive plan. The environmental
12 assessment came out in 2019. So it was during that
13 45-day public comment period in the spring of 2019
14 when we had the first chance to tell what we thought
15 about this project. We got over 2,000 comments on
16 the record. 91 percent of them were opposed to the
17 project. ODOT was really frustrated with that.

18 Demands for environmental impact statement
19 -- as opposed to the environmental assessment, which
20 ODOT is currently proposing and is conducting -- we
21 want a fuller, more thorough study that looks at
22 alternatives to expansion. Demands for EIS included
23 -- came from places like Metro, the City of
24 Portland, Audubon Society of Portland, Audit Oregon
25 (inaudible), Business for a Portland, Former State

1 Representative Karin Power.

2 We had the in-person public hearing at the
3 convention center where we had dozens of folks come
4 and speak directly to ODOT staff about why they
5 wanted to fight this freeway in their neighborhood.

6 The Oregon Transportation Commission
7 approved plans in April 2020 for this project in a
8 hearing that the public was unable to speak at or
9 testify. And the federal government issued a
10 finding of no significant impact saying that, okay,
11 you can move forward with the environmental
12 assessment plans that you came up with. So we sued
13 because lawsuits are fun. And that's how we hold
14 powerful institutions accountable.

15 We filed two lawsuits in 2021, one through
16 the Land Use Board of Appeals and statewide and then
17 nationally through the national Environmental
18 Protection Act.

19 We have a rally outside this building.
20 It's like one of the first events we got to do post-
21 COVID. I'm seeing some head nods. It was a fun
22 day.

23 And also, 2021 was the start of something
24 that I'm really just honored to have been witness
25 to, the beginning of the Youth versus ODOT climate

1 strikes that happened outside the Oregon Department
2 of Transportation every other week for over a year.
3 Those events caught the attention --

4 **(Applause.)**

5 **MR. BROWN:** If I -- if I shut up, some of
6 the teens will actually get to come speak. You can
7 listen to them. They're more cool than I am.

8 The Youth versus ODOT protests got a ton
9 of attention locally, statewide, and nationally. It
10 was written up in CityLab, VICE, the New York Times.

11 In 2022, after all the attention that we
12 focused on this, the federal government actually
13 rescinded the finding of no significant impact that
14 they had issued the previous two years ago. Without
15 that document, ODOT cannot move forward with this
16 project. So what ODOT is doing now, is they've
17 released a supplemental environmental assessment,
18 which is pretty much entirely what they submitted in
19 2019 with some other details. And we are in the
20 midst of the 45-day public comment period for that.
21 And that ends tomorrow.

22 So that's why we're here, because ODOT
23 decided against in -- hosting an in-person public
24 comment meeting. And so we said, all right, we'll
25 just -- we'll just host our own. And so I'm really,

1 really grateful that all of you are here today.

2 So my final thoughts on this -- No More
3 Freeways' official response for the public comment
4 period, Chris and Joe, in particular, have done
5 incredible work going line item through line item of
6 all the different pages of this document, finding
7 the spots where they are lying to us. And we are
8 going to be hearing about that directly from them
9 and the rest of you tonight.

10 We are in full support of building caps
11 and hybrid 3 plan to restore the Albina
12 neighborhood. We want to see investment. We want
13 to see healing from the racist plundering that
14 happened in this neighborhood 70 years ago.

15 We still believe that this neighborhood
16 will be healthier and safer and more vibrant if it
17 has less air pollution and less asthma coming from
18 additional lanes of diesel trucks running right
19 through this neighborhood. And we have reasons for
20 deep skepticism for ODOT's claims to be otherwise,
21 given the way they've been funding their traffic
22 projections. And by doing so, that also means that
23 they are able to manipulate how much air pollution,
24 how much traffic congestion, and how much carbon
25 emissions this project is going to create.

1 So we are going to begin with some invited
2 testimony, and then we're going to go through the
3 folks that have signed up. If you have not signed
4 up yet, you still can.

5 And we are first going to start with
6 Taylor [REDACTED].

7 **(Applause.)**

8 **MR. BROWN:** And I need (inaudible) folks
9 feel comfortable getting close. I -- I think our
10 camera crew is eager to show as much of the crowd as
11 possible in some of the filming. So if folks are --
12 if you're figuring out where you want to sit or
13 stand, the more that you're within the line of
14 sight, the more that ODOT is going to have to listen
15 to all these faces (inaudible).

16 It's time for me to shut up. Please
17 welcome Taylor.

18 **(Applause.)**

19 **MR. BROWN:** The -- the final (inaudible),
20 we're going to call for folks. Next up after Taylor
21 is going to be Nakisha. And I'm just going to
22 announce who's speaking next and then the one or two
23 afterwards. If you guys want to come up and get
24 close to the mic, we'll run it that way.

25 We've got a couple invited testimony that

1 might go longer than three minutes. But once we get
2 to everyone else -- we all got enough to do today.
3 I don't want people to be here forever. Please keep
4 your comments to three minutes.

5 Ukiah and I -- Ukiah's been deputized to
6 shout at you if you go over your three minutes.
7 Ukiah doesn't like shouting at people. Don't make
8 her do that.

9 **MS.** [REDACTED]: Unless it's ODOT.

10 **MR. BROWN:** Yeah. Just --

11 **(Simultaneous speaking.)**

12 **MR. BROWN:** All right. With that, take it
13 away, Taylor.

14 **MS.** [REDACTED]: Okay. Should I take this --
15 okay.

16 Hi. My name is Taylor [REDACTED]. I'm a 16-
17 year-old high school student. I'm also a member of
18 Sunrise PDX. I've worked on the Youth versus ODOT
19 campaign. And I also work for Neighbors for Clean
20 Air.

21 I'm here today because I see an issue.
22 Our planet is dying, and we are the cause of it. We
23 are living in times where heat waves and fires are
24 killing hundreds of Oregonians. I'm growing up in a
25 world where getting to school means polluting the

1 place I call home. 40 percent of Oregon's carbon
2 emissions come from transportation. And even though
3 elected officials know this, they're not doing
4 anything about it.

5 Our world is changing in devastating ways,
6 and we're not doing enough. And honestly, I'm
7 scared. I'm scared of this very real possible --
8 very real possibility.

9 But what's even worse is that time and
10 time again, after we've gone to countless meetings
11 for city councilmembers, Metro, and the Oregon
12 Transportation Commission, after I and thousands of
13 my classmates took to the streets and protested and
14 shouted at the adults in charge of this city to
15 change and stand up against climate change, they
16 keep making stupid decisions like the Rose Quarter
17 Expansion Project.

18 I've been working on this project for over
19 a year now. It is not acceptable. I'm sure most of
20 you, especially any Tubman students here tonight,
21 have been down past the playground and have seen
22 this freeway. How is this acceptable?

23 The students that go here are already
24 breathing in some of the most polluted air in the
25 entire City of Portland. And now they want to move

1 the freeway close and create more pollution?

2 Well, they say we can just move the
3 school. But what happens when the school is moved
4 then -- but eventually the air quality is toxic
5 everywhere in the city? What then?

6 We cannot keep prioritizing expanding
7 freeways over the literal health and safety of the
8 people that live here because what good are widened
9 freeways on a planet where ecosystems cannot sustain
10 food, where floods, fires, droughts, and storms only
11 get worse with every passing year?

12 I'm 16-year-old -- 16 years old now.
13 Climate scientists say that our fate will be largely
14 sealed by 2030. In 2030, I will be 23 years old.
15 The kids that go here now will only be 19. What
16 kind of life is that for us? Are we really willing
17 to give up and succumb to this future? I'm not.

18 It is time to fight. We cannot let this
19 expansion pass. I demand that, on behalf of an
20 entire generation of Oregonians terrified of climate
21 change, ODOT, do -- please conduct a full
22 environmental impact statement that studies
23 alternatives to adding more fossil fuel
24 infrastructure to our city. The oceans are rising,
25 and so are we.

1 Thank you.

2 **(Applause.)**

3 **MR. BROWN:** That was awesome. Thank you
4 so much, Taylor. Appreciate it.

5 **(Applause.)**

6 **MR. BROWN:** All right. Because this is
7 our event and not ODOT's, we can be a little bit
8 more fun. So feel free to cheer people on. Like,
9 you know, be -- be encouraging. Don't be a jerk.

10 I'm really grateful that we're all in this
11 space here together today. And so I -- I think it's
12 really helpful that we're all affirming what
13 everyone else is saying. So please feel free to
14 support, especially when you give bad-ass testimony
15 like that. So -- and the next piece of testimony is
16 going to be really bad-ass as well.

17 So with that, I pass it off to Nakisha.

18 **MS. NATHAN:** It might be a bit repetitive
19 to your introduction. But I'm -- I'm going to add
20 some things here.

21 So good evening. My name is Nakisha
22 Nathan. I am the Director of Strategic Partnerships
23 with Neighbors for Clean Air, a nonprofit
24 organization that advocates to create a healthier
25 Oregon through the reduction of air pollution so

1 every Oregonian can breathe clean air every day
2 everywhere.

3 I'm here today because we oppose the
4 expansion of the I-5 freeway. A full environmental
5 impact statement must be done to study alternatives
6 to freeway widening, alternatives that support
7 investment and infrastructure and amplify the vision
8 of Albina community leaders and residents to restore
9 this neighborhood.

10 When the I-5 freeway was completed in
11 1962, not only did it split through the heart of
12 Oregon's largest Black neighborhood and demolish
13 over 300 homes, which it never replaced, it was also
14 built in the backyard of this school right there.

15 For years, students in this historically
16 Black neighborhood have been breathing dangerous
17 levels of pollutants from the cars and trucks using
18 the freeway. When the levels of arsenic and
19 petroleum byproducts that come from vehicle exhausts
20 were found to be well in excess of local safety
21 guidelines, Neighbors for Clean Air partnered with
22 Portland State University and advocated for
23 improvements to this school's indoor air quality.

24 The PSU team designed a state-of-the-art
25 air filtration system and a maintenance plan, which

1 is installed as part of the \$30 million renovation -
2 - now -- oh, a major part of a \$30 million
3 renovation. It was said just moments ago upwards of
4 \$20 million.

5 So now, Harriet Tubman Middle School has
6 the best indoor air quality system in the district.
7 However, there is still guidance from PSU
8 researchers suggesting that students' outdoor
9 activities be limited. It's not safe to have recess
10 outdoors. Stay inside where our \$20 million system
11 makes it easier for your students to breathe.

12 Harriet Tubman students refuse to remain
13 silent as the threat of continued pollution from
14 vehicle exhaust became clear to them. In 2019, with
15 the help of Gerald Scrutchins, a teacher and
16 coordinator of environmental justice groups here at
17 the school, Neighbors for Clean Air mobilized
18 students to head to Salem and voice their concerns.
19 Young activists from Harriet Tubman Middle School
20 told legislators about the impacts of air pollution
21 on their lives, and their testimony was key to the
22 passage of HB 2007. This is legislation that made
23 Oregon the second state in the nation to have any
24 regulations on the operation of big trucks to reduce
25 diesel emissions.

1 Their hard work and the costly
2 improvements to this school will, however, be
3 compromised if this freeway is expanded. ODOT has
4 failed to adequately address the increase in air
5 pollution and greenhouse gas emissions that will
6 result with the addition of over a million
7 additional vehicle miles of travel that will come
8 from aspects of this design.

9 I'm going to go back to the statement I
10 just made before that. The hard work of the
11 students and the costly improvements to this school
12 will be compromised if this freeway is expanded, if
13 we're able to see millions of miles of vehicle
14 travel added to just overcome these improvements
15 that have been made and all of the hard work of the
16 students who have used their voice to tell their
17 stories.

18 This project is a disaster for air
19 pollution in a community trying to heal from
20 repeated harms caused by ODOT and institutional
21 systemic racism. We must see a comprehensive
22 environmental impact statement that includes
23 alternatives to support restoration and repair.

24 Thank you.

25 **(Applause.)**

1 **MR. BROWN:** I don't know if anyone has
2 decided yet whether or not they also support an
3 environmental impact statement. You're welcome to
4 be the first with the Post-it note. There we go.

5 **(Applause.)**

6 **MR. BROWN:** Feel free throughout the
7 evening. We'll see what the open score is.

8 So next up, we have one of the founding
9 members of No More Freeways, the economist from City
10 Observatory, Mr. Joe Cortright.

11 **(Applause.)**

12 **MR. CORTRIGHT:** Thank you. And it's a
13 pleasure to be here.

14 For the record, Joe Cortright. I'm an
15 economist with City Observatory, a longtime resident
16 of Portland. And it's -- I appreciate the invitation
17 and -- and the slightly longer period of time that
18 you've given me. I hope I use it wisely and to
19 everyone's benefit.

20 So as Aaron mentioned, we've taken a very
21 close look at the technical work that's been done
22 for the Rose Quarter project. And what I want to
23 suggest is that there are serious problems with the
24 technical analysis. It dramatically understates the
25 negative environmental impacts of freeway widening.

1 And one of the tragic things about this
2 whole discussion is, half a century ago, Portland
3 knew that expanding freeways was bad for the
4 community. We took out Harbor Drive. We didn't
5 build the Mt. Hood freeway. We didn't build a
6 Prescott freeway through north and northeast
7 Portland. But today --

8 **(Applause.)**

9 **MR. CORTRIGHT:** Today, tragically, the
10 environmental impact process has been twisted by the
11 Oregon Department of Transportation by presenting
12 false and misleading information about the impacts
13 of freeways. And what I want to do is give you a
14 quick version of the analysis that we'll be
15 submitting in our formal comments to the -- to the
16 Oregon Department of Transportation and the U.S.
17 Department of Transportation.

18 In reality -- and this is a picture you
19 won't see often -- we're really talking about a
20 mammoth freeway- widening project, widening the I-5
21 freeway to as many as 10 lanes for a mile and a half
22 through north and northeast Portland.

23 And this comes at a time when the science
24 on the effects of freeways is increasingly well
25 known. We've been building freeways for 70 years in

1 the United States, and traffic congestion has only
2 gotten worse. And the reason for that is something
3 called induced demand. And I know we have, I think,
4 the -- the songwriter who has captured that here
5 today. Paul is somewhere behind us.

6 **(Applause.)**

7 **MR. CORTRIGHT:** But to us boring
8 economists --

9 **MR. BROWN:** There will be musical
10 testimony --

11 **MR. CORTRIGHT:** Yes. We're looking
12 forward to that.

13 So yeah, the thing I will show you is
14 basically the journal article, which now calls this
15 the fundamental law of road congestion. This is not
16 in dispute. Expanding roadways encourages people to
17 drive more, increases congestion, and increases
18 pollution. You cannot build your way out of
19 congestion, and yet that is exactly what ODOT is
20 planning to do.

21 Now, the tragic thing about this project
22 is that, despite all of the money that's been spent
23 on so-called public outreach, nothing has really
24 been told you about the size of the project. You're
25 being told by ODOT that they're just going to add

1 one or two auxiliary lanes to this freeway. But
2 occasionally, they let slip what this will really
3 look like.

4 This is a picture of what it will look
5 like near where we are today at Tubman school where
6 they will literally cut away the hillside to bring
7 the freeway even closer. And while they show a
8 certain number of striped lanes here, they're
9 actually planning to build a roadway that's much
10 wider.

11 They present this comic book illustration,
12 which they note is "not to scale," which shows the
13 existing freeway at the top, four lanes of traffic,
14 and then supposedly just adding two additional
15 "auxiliary lanes" at the bottom. That's not the
16 reality.

17 We found the actual plans, ones that ODOT
18 didn't produce in the environmental assessment, ones
19 that they kept hidden. And we found three different
20 versions that showed that they're actually planning
21 160-foot-wide roadway. And 160 feet is wide enough
22 for a 10-lane freeway through our -- through our
23 neighborhoods.

24 So this isn't a simple little expansion.
25 It's actually a mega freeway which could have five

1 lanes of traffic in both directions in that 160-
2 foot-roadway.

3 But why does that matter? Because when
4 you expand the capacity, we know that people who are
5 avoiding the area now will suddenly choose to take
6 trips through it. And that will produce more
7 pollution.

8 We have something -- sorry -- called the
9 induced travel calculator, which is based on the
10 best scientific research about the impact of adding
11 capacity to new driving. It shows that widening
12 this freeway would add between 31 million and 47
13 million additional vehicle miles of travel in the
14 Portland area as a result. And that would produce
15 between 200,000 and 500,000 additional tons of
16 greenhouse gases as a result.

17 So this is a project that we know, based
18 on the best available scientific literature, will
19 add to greenhouse gases. Now, ODOT has tried to
20 deny that by claiming that they're only building
21 those two additional lanes. But in reality, they're
22 building a structure that's easily wide enough to
23 handle much more.

24 And what's perverse about that, in fact,
25 is the fact that traffic in this area has actually

1 been going down for 25 years. Now, these are not my
2 numbers. These are numbers taken from the Oregon
3 Department of Transportation. It used to be that,
4 about 135,000 vehicles a day travel through the Rose
5 Quarter area. That has declined to about 120,000.
6 And that's before the pandemic.

7 And what ODOT is saying is, if we do
8 nothing, there will be this huge increase in
9 traffic. But that's not been the trend in this
10 area. So they're widening a freeway in an area
11 where traffic has been declining for a quarter of a
12 century.

13 And they're proposing to do it at
14 prodigious cost. This would probably be the most
15 expensive freeway construction project in the United
16 States on a per-mile basis.

17 As Aaron mentioned, the -- the original
18 estimates we were told, this would cost \$450
19 million. Then that double to about \$800 million.
20 And the most recent estimates are it will be \$1.45
21 billion. That works out to about a billion dollars
22 a mile for a freeway. Just imagine what you could
23 do with a billion dollars for anything else. Do we
24 really need a billion dollars to get a billion-
25 dollar-a-mile freeway?

1 (Applause.)

2 MR. CORTRIGHT: And what's worse is the
3 Oregon Department of Transportation, frankly, just
4 doesn't have the money to pay for it. Their plan --
5 they haven't developed a plan as yet to show where
6 the money will come from. In fact, what they've
7 done is, in the last two years, shifted the money
8 the legislature designated for this project and,
9 instead, used it for the Abernethy I-205 bridge in
10 Oregon City, which means that they now have a more
11 than billion-dollar shortfall in the amount of money
12 that's needed for this project.

13 But their plan is to just get the project
14 started and spend a few hundred million dollars
15 getting it started and then come back with a
16 partially finished project and ask for the
17 additional billion dollars. That's no way to make a
18 rational policy decision, and we shouldn't go along
19 with it.

20 The other thing we know, because ODOT has
21 told us, is that the only way that they can come up
22 with this kind of money is to put tolls on local
23 freeways. And the -- this is the head of the Oregon
24 Transportation Commission in March of last year
25 saying they don't have the resources to build this

1 project without tolling. And that's probably true.

2 But the conundrum from the standpoint of
3 an economist is, if you toll these roadways, then
4 fewer people will drive on them. So while you're
5 spending a billion dollars, or a billion and a half
6 dollars, widening the freeway, putting tolls on it
7 will cause fewer people to use it, which is
8 something they failed completely to analyze in their
9 environmental impact statement.

10 We do have some other work that was done
11 commissioned by ODOT for a separate project that
12 shows that tolling will actually do a better job of
13 improving congestion -- that is, reducing traffic
14 and speeding the flow of traffic than widening the
15 freeway because tolling would shift traffic to off-
16 peak times, and it would work better.

17 **(Applause.)**

18 **MR. CORTRIGHT:** So ironically, instead of
19 spending a billion and a half dollars to widen a
20 freeway that we don't need, if we just charged a
21 price for its use at the peak hour, we could shift
22 traffic and avoid a lot of the congestion problems
23 that we have.

24 So to summarize, this is a giant freeway.
25 It's a 160-foot-wide freeway. Don't listen to talk

1 about so-called auxiliary lanes. It will increase
2 traffic and greenhouse pollution, according to the
3 best available scientific information.

4 Congestion won't go down because of
5 induced demand. It isn't really needed because
6 traffic in this area has stabilized. And if
7 anything declined, this is a hugely expensive
8 project that they don't have the money to pay for.
9 And if they implement tolling, we really don't even
10 need to expand the freeway here.

11 So with that, thank you for your comment -
12 - for -- for your opportunity.

13 **(Applause.)**

14 **MR. CORTRIGHT:** And we do need an EIS to
15 fully explore this.

16 Thank you.

17 **MR. BROWN:** Thank you. Joe Cortright,
18 everybody.

19 **(Applause.)**

20 **MR. BROWN:** Next up, we have Danny [REDACTED]
21 from Sunrise PDX.

22 **(Applause.)**

23 **MR. BROWN:** It looks like Joe's testimony
24 was convincing.

25 Again, if you want (inaudible) here for

1 you to decide, wherever you like.

2 Sorry. Just -- yeah, go for it, Danny.

3 **MR. [REDACTED]**: My name is Danny [REDACTED]. I'm a
4 member of Sunrise PDX. I have the honor of serving
5 on the Oregon's Environmental Justice Council as a
6 State board member appointed by Governor Kate Brown
7 this year as its youngest member. More importantly,
8 I am a high school student who should be doing math
9 homework right now and not telling a transportation
10 agency how to conduct itself.

11 **(Applause.)**

12 **MR. [REDACTED]**: I am speaking here today in
13 strong support of the Oregon Department of
14 Transportation conducting an environmental impact
15 statement on the proposed Rose Quarter freeway
16 expansion.

17 As the climate crisis continues nationwide
18 and, more importantly, statewide, it is important to
19 me -- important to me not only how we implemental
20 environmental justice in our work, but have it
21 embedded in our process so it is not an
22 afterthought.

23 As both a young Oregonian who is a
24 frontline community member, a young person, and a
25 State board member of the Environmental Justice

1 Council, it is important to me how ODOT conducts
2 itself again and again because, yes, I believe the
3 idea that a public transportation -- that a public
4 transit agency should be able to conduct itself in a
5 manner that honors the citizens that it serves.

6 Recently, Oregon passed --

7 **(Applause.)**

8 **MR. [REDACTED]:** -- HB 47, which allows natural
9 resource agencies, which ODOT is defined as to
10 request consultation from the Environmental Justice
11 Council. I believe that the Department of
12 Transportation should request consultation from both
13 the Environmental Justice Council as well as the
14 communities that their projects affect.

15 On the Rose Quarter proposal -- as the
16 Rose Quarter proposal has proved both past and
17 present to be problematic, controversial, rooted in
18 racism, lacked community collaboration, I request
19 that ODOT not only do an environmental impact
20 statement, but also address the impact freeways may
21 have on noise pollution, green space, and et cetera.

22 I urge ODOT to conduct an environmental
23 impact statement and go further because I believe an
24 agency should think of itself not as a freeway
25 agency, but as a transportation agency.

1 Thank you.

2 **(Applause.)**

3 **MR. BROWN:** All right. Next up, we have
4 the Eliot Neighborhood Association's Allan Rudwick.

5 Allan, where are you?

6 I -- there he is. I promised to give
7 people a head's up, and I just did not.

8 After Allan, we've got -- is Michelle
9 Dewberry here?

10 Michelle. Michelle, you're next after
11 Allan.

12 **MR. RUDWICK:** Thanks, Aaron.

13 So you know, I'm representing the
14 neighborhood that we're in right now, the Eliot
15 neighborhood, which went from a population of 12,000
16 down to a population of 4,000 due to various
17 planning projects, some of which you mentioned
18 earlier.

19 And this area, which is close to downtown,
20 wants to be an urban neighborhood with tall
21 buildings and lots of people living here. You --
22 this current project, which I've been following
23 since November of 2010, began because some highway
24 engineers think that a mistake was made many years
25 ago. And that mistake, they believe, was that I-5

1 was made too narrow.

2 However, this mistake was actually a
3 blessing because even more cars coming through this
4 neighborhood would be that much worse for the
5 climate and for local air pollution, which we've
6 been monitoring recently and hope to have more data
7 on soon.

8 Widening the highway is not going to make
9 this area more livable. If this was a jobs project,
10 we should be building something with our money
11 that's going to actually stand the test of time.

12 What are we getting for 1.5, \$1.4 billion?
13 We're getting something that no one wants. We could
14 be spending that money building housing. People
15 just worked --

16 **(Applause.)**

17 **MR. RUDWICK:** -- really hard to pass the
18 housing bond. We could have more housing at the end
19 of spending that much money. You could easily do
20 the same minority contractor and all the other
21 incentives that ODOT is trying to throw to make this
22 project more palatable. It could just be done by
23 ding a different kind of building.

24 This -- the interchange that's being
25 designed appears to be trying to pump a lot more

1 cars onto local streets into our neighborhood, which
2 we are very opposed to.

3 This project should be killed. If it
4 needs an EIS to study some other alternatives,
5 that's a good plan. If someone decides to just pull
6 the plug on the funding for this project, that also
7 sounds like an okay plan to us.

8 **(Applause.)**

9 **MR. RUDWICK:** This -- this neighborhood
10 wants to be an urban neighborhood. It's an inner
11 area. It's close to downtown. It has great access
12 to lots of things.

13 And this project, having been hanging over
14 the area for the last 13, 14 years, has been
15 delaying development. I've seen multiple projects
16 prozed and get shelved. And a big part of it is,
17 well, what's going to happen over there with the
18 freeway? So hurry up. Kill it already so we can
19 get on with building ourselves back up and realizing
20 the vision that people have for greatness here.

21 Thank you.

22 **(Applause.)**

23 **MR. BROWN:** All right. Thank you, Allan.

24 Next up, we have Michelle, followed by
25 Will Henderson.

1 Michelle, thank you for being here.

2 **MS. DEWBERRY:** Hello. My name is Michelle
3 Dewberry. And I am a member of the Oregon and
4 Southwest Washington Chapter of Families for Safe
5 Streets.

6 All of our members have lost a family
7 member in a traffic crash or suffered a serious
8 injury. Most of our chapter members are bereaved
9 parents.

10 Families for Safe Streets urges the Oregon
11 Department of Transportation to conduct a full
12 environmental impact statement and refocus the Rose
13 Quarter Improvement Project to center safe
14 transportation for non- drivers and healing the
15 Albina neighborhood.

16 Families for Safe Streets supports the
17 proposed freeway cap included in hybrid 3 as well as
18 affordable housing and bicycle and pedestrian safety
19 improvements.

20 These components can and should be
21 accomplished without the expansion of I-5, which
22 will result in more noise, pollution, death, and
23 injury in the surrounding community.

24 Pedestrian and traffic deaths are at a 70-
25 year high in Portland. And yet ODOT's own analysis

1 shows that this project will make conditions worse
2 for people walking in the Rose Quarter. The freeway
3 offramp included in Highway 3 will result in a flood
4 of cars into the streets surrounding the Moda
5 Center.

6 ODOT's supplemental environmental
7 assessment references pedestrian-auto conflict,
8 which is a sanitized way of saying human bodies,
9 loved ones, friends, and neighbors will be struck by
10 thousands of pounds of metal traveling at high
11 speeds.

12 Twelve years ago, my one-year-old son,
13 Shamis, experienced a pedestrian-auto conflict on an
14 ODOT road. His -- his 30-pound body did not stand a
15 chance against the careless driver who plowed
16 through our cross -- crowded crosswalk. He is one
17 of hundreds of people who have been killed and
18 injured on ODOT roads. So when I hear the agency
19 asking taxpayers to foot the bill for a \$1.5 billion
20 highway expansion, their claims about safety ring
21 pretty hollow.

22 Families for Safe Streets does not accept
23 the deaths and injuries of our loved ones, the
24 poisoning of the air, or the destruction of our
25 planet as acceptable trade- offs for faster freight

1 transport or convenience of motorists. An EIS is a
2 critical component of accountability that will
3 ensure our tax dollars are not worsening the twin
4 crises of traffic violence and climate change.

5 Thank you.

6 **(Applause.)**

7 **MR. BROWN:** Thank you, Michelle.

8 Next up, we have William Henderson,
9 followed by Claire Vlach.

10 **MR. HENDERSON:** All right. My name is
11 Will Henderson. I'm father of two, also a small
12 business owner.

13 And a few years ago, I also started
14 Business for a Better Portland, got together with
15 some other like-minded business owners. And what we
16 found is that there's a lot of business owners out
17 there who just don't know how to engage in -- in
18 what's going on. And we got together as a way to
19 increase that engagement, representing cities that -
20 - that actually want to have Portland be a better
21 place for everyone.

22 So I have, in my work, spoken with
23 business owners of every size, every industry
24 imaginable. And you know, what they all say is --
25 is different. But something that I hear often is we

1 started our business in Portland for a reason.

2 We didn't just, you know, pick Portland
3 because it was the -- you know, the biggest city or
4 the city with the best resources. A lot of it had
5 to do with what Portland values. We're a city that
6 values community, livability, sustainability. Those
7 are things that brought me to Portland 20 years ago,
8 and those are reasons why I and countless other
9 folks have decided to start a business here.

10 And if you think about those things --
11 community, livability, sustainability -- they all
12 have one thing in common. And that is that they
13 take time. They take care. That's what all of you
14 are doing here tonight by being here. And I so
15 appreciate that.

16 And that is why it's so offensive for a
17 state agency who is supposed to be working for us to
18 be rushing through a project trying to hit an
19 arbitrary 2023 construction deadline they have set
20 for themselves so that other folks can rush through
21 our neighborhood.

22 That is not what Portland's about. That's
23 not why I started a business here. I don't think
24 it's what makes Portland great. And I think we can
25 do better.

1 So we're asking you, ODOT, to slow down;
2 consider the alternatives; do your homework,
3 including a full environmental impact study, just
4 like all of us are going to go home and do our --
5 our jobs and our homework when we get done here; and
6 consider what makes Portland great. It might be
7 different from the things that -- that ODOT
8 typically values in its processes.

9 Thank you.

10 **(Applause.)**

11 **MR. BROWN:** All right. We've got Claire
12 next, followed by Ukiah.

13 **MS. VLACH:** I've cried twice in public
14 meetings in the last two months, and they were both
15 ODOT's fault. So good job, ODOT.

16 My name is Claire Vlach, and I'm
17 testifying on behalf of Oregon Walks.

18 I don't have a lot of faith that -- that anyone
19 at ODOT will pay attention to this testimony. Here
20 is why: I was the pedestrian representative on the
21 2020 I-5 Rose Quarter Community Advisory Committee.
22 And that -- that committee was made up of community
23 members chosen by ODOT, including transportation
24 advocates and people born and raised in the Albina
25 neighborhood.

1 As representatives of the community, we
2 repeatedly asked ODOT if we could provide input on
3 the single largest part of this project, the
4 freeway. And every time, ODOT said, no, we do not
5 want to listen to you.

6 So since ODOT doesn't seem to care what
7 the people think about that part of the project, I'm
8 hoping they will care about what they claim is their
9 number one concern, safety. So --

10 **(Applause.)**

11 **MS. VLACH:** -- there -- we have some
12 slides, I think. Well, okay. I can describe
13 without the slides some of what ODOT is planning on
14 building.

15 So there is going to be a new hairpin turn
16 coming off the freeway that is -- that will take --
17 all of the exiting traffic exiting from I-5 will
18 take that hairpin turn. And that turn is so tight
19 that ODOT requires a design exception from their own
20 freeway manual to build it. And they estimate that
21 this ramp will increase crashes by 13 percent, so
22 unsafe for cars.

23 This very same exit ramp will cross the
24 Williams Avenue bike lane. Anybody who bikes in
25 Portland knows that's a major bike route through the

1 city. And there's now going to be 12,500 vehicles
2 exiting I-5 and taking Williams Avenue -- unsafe for
3 bikes.

4 So due to all those -- due to the new
5 location of the ramp, those cars are going to be --
6 having to make extra turns through the area,
7 producing, just due to those extra turns, 1.3
8 million more miles of local vehicle traffic in the
9 Rose Quarter and leading to the closure of two
10 separate crosswalks due to -- this is a direct quote
11 from the environmental assessment -- "increased
12 traffic generated by the ramp."

13 So pedestrians will have to triple the
14 number of dangerous crossings they have to make,
15 crossings which are made even more dangerous by the
16 increased traffic.

17 **THE AUDIENCE:** Boo.

18 **MS. VLACH:** Right. Yes.

19 It will also be made more dangerous by
20 longer crossings due to ODOT shaving off corners so
21 that cars can drive even faster around those
22 corners.

23 And well, Michelle already quoted this,
24 but I'm going to quote it again. The project will
25 cause "increased potential for pedestrian-auto

1 conflict."

2 **THE AUDIENCE:** Boo.

3 **MS. VLACH:** ODOT is planning on spending
4 \$1.5 billion to increase the chance that somebody
5 will end up in the hospital or at the morgue. But
6 they won't spare a few million dollars for safety
7 improvements on our deadly orphan highways like
8 Powell Boulevard and TV Highway.

9 **(Applause.)**

10 **MR. BROWN:** We're trying to get the images
11 of this up here. Claire is doing a really good job
12 describing it. I'm sorry for the tech snafu.

13 Go on. Sorry.

14 **MS. VLACH:** So to be clear, Oregon Walks
15 does not support freeway expansion. It is a
16 misguided investment and an outdated transportation
17 system with negative effects on transportation
18 justice, air quality, climate change, and
19 livability. And it doesn't even fix the one problem
20 it does claim to solve -- congestion.

21 Apparently, ODOT doesn't care about any of
22 this. And yet in the one area that ODOT does claim
23 to care about, safety, this project is, by their own
24 assessment, also a failure.

25 Briefly, some things Oregon Walks does

1 support: We support building lids over the freeway
2 to reconnect the neighborhood, congestion pricing to
3 improve traffic flow on I-5 with funds dedicated to
4 improved transit, a full environmental impact
5 statement to show the true environmental costs of
6 this project, and union construction jobs with good
7 pay, putting people to work all over the state,
8 building safer streets for pedestrians and other
9 vulnerable road users.

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. BROWN: All right. Thank you, Claire.

12 Next up, we have Ukiah, followed by Susan
13 Bladholm.

14 MS. [REDACTED]: All righty. Hello.

15 My name is Ukiah [REDACTED]. And usually, I
16 say I'm an organizer with Sunrise Rural Oregon and
17 Youth versus ODOT. But today I'm not really an
18 organizer. Today I'm just a 17-year-old girl.

19 I've lived on a farm my whole life. It's
20 home to goats and chickens and a big garden and
21 forest. And if you look out the front window in my
22 house, there is this giant beautiful hayfield.

23 Every year, an old farmer and his son cut
24 and rake and bale and buck that hay to sell. And I
25 remember being a little kid and, before their

1 tractors showed up on our driveway, running through
2 those magical green field full of grasses that
3 reached past my head.

4 Nine years passed. I turned 16. And the
5 thermometer read 113 degrees in the shade. The
6 temperature rose and rose and didn't fall below 95
7 degrees. And the heat baked those beautiful fields
8 of hay, turning them brown before each stalk could
9 finish growing. And then they stood just up to my
10 knees, withered and shrunken from the heat and the
11 drought.

12 My neighbors, those farmers, worked in the
13 heat harvesting that meager proportion of grass, and
14 they got a lot less hay that year, probably less
15 than any year that they'd been alive or that their
16 families had farmed this land. The heat, they said,
17 we're just dealing with Mother Nature. I really
18 wish that was all.

19 So I'm just a 17-year-old girl who dreams
20 about traveling and making art and learning
21 languages and finding a job that I really, really
22 love and raising kids and building community,
23 growing a garden, and hiking on Mt. Hood. I'm just
24 a 17-year-old girl who reads the news and listens to
25 transportation experts and scientists and pays

1 attention to historical patterns. And I see the
2 flaws in ODOT's proposed freeway expansions,
3 including the one right out here.

4 So yeah, I'm just a 17-year-old girl. But
5 I've done my research, and I'm asking ODOT to do
6 theirs. Hey, ODOT, conduct an environmental impact
7 statement on this unstrategic, polluting, dangerous,
8 money-sucking freeway expansion before it's too
9 late.

10 **(Applause.)**

11 **MR. BROWN:** Susan, I'm sorry you have to
12 follow that.

13 **MS. BLADHOLM:** Right?

14 **MR. BROWN:** Susan Bladholm, followed next
15 by Robin Sack.

16 **MS. BLADHOLM:** Hello, Commissioner Van
17 Brocklin and Director Kris Strickler and ODOT
18 commissioners. My name is Susan Bladholm, and I'm
19 the founder of Frog Ferry. I spent 35 years of my
20 career here in the Portland, Oregon region in
21 transportation infrastructure, economic development,
22 and operations.

23 Come on, ODOT. It's time to address our
24 climate crisis with integrity --

25 **(Applause.)**

1 **MS. BLADHOLM:** -- and urgency -- integrity
2 and urgency. Integrity is listed as your top value.
3 You have mega projects on the drawing board, and I
4 ask you to take a look at these projects and be
5 honest about how they will impact air quality and
6 induce more car capacity.

7 While your credibility legacy, your
8 personal legacies, are at stake, our collective
9 health and the safety for many generations to come
10 is at stake as well. Please don't let your legacy be
11 that of continuing to pollute our air.

12 Safety is your second listed value.
13 Please live up to it.

14 As you are aware, 40 percent of greenhouse
15 gas emissions are caused by transportation, and you
16 have the opportunity to invest a new and active
17 transit to get cars off roadways, to help with
18 traffic congestion, and free up roadways for things
19 like freight mobility.

20 Excellence is one of your values. How are
21 you driving excellence through innovation?

22 I am advocating for a new green mode of
23 transit steeped in social and environmental equity
24 while advancing climate resilience, supporting
25 disadvantaged communities, and bringing innovation

1 to our region.

2 Equity is also listed as one of your
3 values. Frog Ferry can stand up and start an
4 electrified ferry service within two years on the
5 Willamette River for \$10 million from Cathedral Park
6 dock to the Riverplace dock in downtown Portland. I
7 started this project almost six years ago because we
8 can't build roadways out of this congestion issue,
9 as Joe has explained.

10 Your mission statement is to provide safe
11 and reliable multi-modal transportation system that
12 connects people and helps Oregon's communities and
13 economy thrive. Please live up to that promise and
14 your own values. Conduct the EIS. It's the right
15 thing to do.

16 Thank you.

17 **(Applause.)**

18 **MR. BROWN:** All right. Thank you, Susan.

19 Next up, we have Robin [REDACTED] with Sunrise PDX,
20 followed by Shane Kwiatkowski from Portland:
21 Neighbors Welcome.

22 **MS. [REDACTED]:** Hello there, ODOT. My name is
23 Robin [REDACTED]. I am a 16-year-old junior in high
24 school with Sunrise PDX and the Youth versus ODOT
25 campaign.

1 And I want to start this off by saying I
2 love public transit with my whole entire heart. I
3 love the feeling of riding the bus to see my friends
4 on a Sunday right before school starts and having my
5 earbuds in my ears, listening to music, and seeing
6 the beautiful scenery around me, and seeing other
7 people being able to enjoy the wonderful privilege
8 that public transit is. And I love the feeling of
9 riding my bike across Alberta Street and just
10 spending time with myself and being able to grow as
11 a teenager in this wonderful city.

12 But I don't love going over a massive
13 pothole while I'm riding the bus. I don't love
14 having to worry about being hit by a car while I'm
15 riding my bike. And what I really don't love is
16 that you are investing \$1.4 billion into this
17 destructive project.

18 **(Applause.)**

19 **MS. [REDACTED]:** I joined the climate movement
20 in September 2021. I was only 14 years old. I just
21 turned 17 last week. And the fact that so much time
22 has passed but such little has changed brings me to
23 tears, honestly.

24 I have spent hours sobbing to my parents
25 in my kitchen saying I don't know what to do. There

1 is so much happening around me, and I don't know
2 what to do. And they just don't have a response for
3 me.

4 And what I want to bring to your attention
5 tonight is that you are an organization full of
6 adults. And tonight, we have multiple teenagers
7 speak on the fact this project is not benefitting
8 anybody. It's going to continue to hurt our planet,
9 to hurt multiple, multiple generations of people,
10 and to hurt people that have been hurt in the past
11 by this project again and again.

12 And so what I came here to ask you
13 tonight, ODOT, is that you conduct a full
14 environmental impact statement on the Rose Quarter
15 freeway expansion project. We are asking for lids,
16 not lanes, because that is the right green thing to
17 do. Please start listening to us. It's time to
18 act.

19 Thank you.

20 **(Applause.)**

21 **MR. BROWN:** We have Shane coming up next,
22 followed by Collin S. Ferguson.

23 Just -- we're almost done. We've only got
24 a couple more folks left that are currently signed
25 up. If you still want to testify, you can. We'll

1 either do it at the end and just let people come up.

2 Or you can sign up.

3 How are folks feeling? Are we doing good?

4 **(Applause.)**

5 **MR. REAGAN:** If you haven't already had
6 the chance to put your Post-it note, many of them
7 are falling off. ODOT is inspiring of this -- this
8 surface. We would love for people to continue to
9 put their Post-it notes up here. And maybe I'll try
10 and stick the ones up on the floor.

11 Shane, followed by Collin.

12 Shane, take it away.

13 **MS. KWIATKOWSKI:** Hello. Good evening,
14 everyone.

15 My name is Shane Kwiatkowski. I am a
16 resident of the area of 34 years, probably
17 representing not just Portland: Neighbors Welcome,
18 but my own lived experience and slight statements
19 regarding this project. Thank you all for being
20 here.

21 Portland: Neighbors Welcome is a
22 grassroots nonprofit that advocates for policies and
23 actions that support and create healthy, vibrant
24 communities. This means advocating for tenant
25 power, preserving affordable housing, and preventing

1 displacement of residents, advocating for zoning
2 changes that allow density in Portland's high-
3 opportunity neighborhoods, and most importantly,
4 seeing planning as an intersectional and multi-
5 faceted practice.

6 We believe in building walkable
7 communities full of abundant, affordable housing
8 connected by frequent, reliable transit. While
9 integration and harmony between transit planning,
10 housing planning, and meeting our carbon emissions
11 goals may never be completely aligned, we must ask
12 ourselves as a community if a multi-billion-dollar
13 investment into widening our highway aligns with our
14 values and goals.

15 We believe that the propose 1.4 billion
16 Rose Quarter freeway expansion will not help solve
17 congestion long term, meet our local and state
18 emissions goals, nor advance equity and restorative
19 justice in the Albina neighborhood.

20 We are, therefore, community partners,
21 including Neighbors for Clean Air, No More Freeways,
22 and demanding that ODOT address -- conduct a full
23 environmental impact statement that studies
24 alternatives to freeway expansion to address
25 congestion, air pollution, and traffic safety.

1 (Applause.)

2 MS. KWIATKOWSKI: Speakers before me --
3 oh, sorry -- speakers before me have very well
4 detailed the -- the checkered history and past and,
5 one would say, tragic, immoral, heavy consequence of
6 the past. I do not need to speak more upon that
7 fact. And I think others, I respect what they have
8 stated before that.

9 What I will state, is -- is that,
10 currently speaking, we are not in a highway lane
11 crisis. We are in a racial equity crisis.

12 (Applause.)

13 MS. KWIATKOWSKI: We're in an affordable
14 housing crisis.

15 (Applause.)

16 MS. KWIATKOWSKI: We are in a wealth and
17 equity crisis, which I would offer this is a very
18 convenient project, as many others, to wedge between
19 the growing disparities square-footage-wise and
20 money-wise and ideology-wise that we think separates
21 us but may not, in fact, actually be really clearly
22 stating the connective ties that ties like mycelial
23 threads under the soil of our shared tragedies and
24 traumas.

25 I would also state that I think it is

1 highly important to always listen to the past and
2 the present, as those are the two ways that we build
3 our future. I think it is highly important that
4 ODOT, which is a collection of humans, which are
5 collected of pasts, which are collected of their
6 base experiences connected to other humans and
7 ecosystems because I also wonder about how many
8 animals and trees have died in the past several
9 decades, of which as a professed animist -- myself,
10 not Portland: Neighbor Welcome -- I feel exceeding
11 rage in regards to the voiceless screams that die in
12 the night.

13 I would heavily argue to ODOT that you may
14 want to listen to the human and non-human voices,
15 which are your -- your predecessors and your
16 contemporaries, as opposed to trying to create and
17 envision a future, which the only inheritances of
18 that past that we are creating now will be people
19 who genuinely and deeply care -- do not care about
20 suffering or in the ways in which our -- our actions
21 yield manifold consequences of which we are clearly
22 seeing the future now through the eyes of ourselves.

23 Thank you.

24 **(Applause.)**

25 **MR. BROWN:** We have Collin next, followed

1 by Chris Smith, followed by Paul Rippey. I know
2 everyone's been very eager to hear Paul.

3 Go ahead. Take it away.

4 **MR. FERGUSON:** Great.

5 Hello, ODOT. My name is Collin Ferguson.
6 And I am now starting a career as a user experience
7 researcher, and I'm currently working on a ride
8 sharing and delivery cooperative. I've been a gig
9 worker since starting with Lyft in 2015, and I am
10 working on a co-op because I want to live a life
11 where I am helping make people -- people's lives
12 better.

13 Since 2015, I have driven over 70,000
14 miles in Portland, and I can attest that our freeway
15 system is insufficient. However, our freeways are
16 insufficient because they were built without
17 community input, nor concern for their wellbeing.

18 So tonight, I wish to include in my
19 testimony in support of a full and complete
20 environmental impact analysis four key issues,
21 starting with Vision Zero. I am grateful to ODOT
22 and PBOT for advocating for the Vision Zero
23 campaign. I donate monthly to the international
24 Vision Zero network.

25 But how is it possible that expanding I-5

1 -- how is expanding I-5 going to meet your goal of
2 eliminating traffic deaths?

3 **(Applause.)**

4 **MR. FERGUSON:** Why are we talking about
5 expanding a freeway system when so many drivers in
6 Portland do not care about following traffic laws
7 and the Portland Police Bureau is not doing much to
8 enforce them?

9 How will expanding I-5 freeway meet the
10 Vision Zero goals? Please include that in your
11 environmental impact analysis.

12 Secondly, including -- in addition to
13 peak-hour tolling, I also want the -- the EIS to
14 include streetlight synchronization. Those two
15 pieces together could ultimately solve all of our
16 traffic problems and eliminate the need for freeway
17 expansion.

18 Third, bring back the Tigard MAX line
19 proposal. We must demand that Metro government offer
20 voters another opportunity to approve Measure 26-
21 218. I strongly believe a MAX line to -- in a MAX
22 line to Tigard. However, it was too easy at the
23 beginning of the pandemic to vote against 26-218.
24 Now that we are more settled with our new reality, I
25 am ready to vote yes on a new ballot measure that

1 funds a MAX line to Tigard.

2 (Applause.)

3 MR. FERGUSON: But wait. One moment.

4 Won't 1.45 billion cover the cost of that MAX line?

5 (Applause.)

6 MR. FERGUSON: I'm just wondering.

7 I want our alternative plans to include
8 discussions about the Southwest Corridor plan. I
9 also want to tell TriMet to stop creating and
10 maintaining automobile- centric transit centers. We
11 need pedestrian and bike- friendly communities
12 surrounding our Light Rail stations, not parking
13 lots.

14 (Applause.)

15 MR. FERGUSON: Lastly, can the
16 environmental impact study include a scenario where
17 I-5 is eliminated on the east side?

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. FERGUSON: A fellow Portlander and
20 user interface designer, Forest Smith -- I don't
21 know if he is here tonight --but anyway, in -- on
22 May 5th, 2014, Forest posted an article about
23 removing I-5 from Portland's east side to his
24 website. His idea proposes design improvements to
25 I-405, making it the official I-5 freeway.

1 Mr. Smith also proposes removing the I-84
2 and I-5 interchange on the east side and replacing
3 it with prime -- prime waterfront real estate. His
4 ideas are remarkably similar to, oh, years ago, a
5 design proposed in one of Portland's long-lost
6 alternative newspapers, which would convert the
7 Marquam Bridge into affordable housing.

8 I don't know where you -- you are, Forest,
9 but I want to invite you back to this conversation.
10 I do -- and I -- I'll do whatever I can to share
11 your post with ODOT.

12 So again, ODOT and PBOT, can the
13 environmental impact study include a scenario where
14 I-5 is eliminated on the east side?

15 Thank you.

16 **(Applause.)**

17 **MR. BROWN:** All right. Next up, No More
18 Freeways' co-founder, Chris Smith.

19 And happy birthday.

20 **MR. SMITH:** Well, thank you to everyone
21 who came out tonight. I had a chance to greet many
22 of you at the door, and I'm delighted that you're
23 all here.

24 I want to put this project in the -- the
25 long context of freeway fighting in this region and

1 where, ultimately, we need to go.

2 You know, I first became aware of the idea
3 for this project back when we were fighting the
4 Columbia River Crossing. And even as that project
5 was failing back in 2010, 2012, people were saying,
6 well, you know, if you do the CRC, the next
7 bottleneck will be Rose Quarter.

8 And sure enough, ODOT came back after the
9 CRC failed with a project -- with this project to
10 expand the freeway at Rose Quarter. I had my first
11 chance to vote against it in 2012 in the Portland
12 Planning and Sustainability Commission. At that
13 time, there was no obvious funding for it, so we
14 didn't get too worried. We should learn from that
15 mistake.

16 House Bill 2017 really changed the
17 landscape when it provided a funding source for this
18 project, which as Joe mentioned, has now been
19 largely spent on the Abernethy Bridge in Oregon
20 City.

21 But it brought forward a whole agenda of
22 freeway widening in the region. And in fact, ODOT
23 has gone so far as to create an Urban Mobility
24 office. And the projects they propose include this
25 project; the revived CRC; the Interstate Bridge

1 Replacement, or IBR; widening seven miles of I-205
2 down by Oregon City. They have expansion on 217
3 under construction, and now they're targeting the
4 Boone Bridge down in Wilsonville. When we add it
5 all up, it's more than \$8 billion of freeway
6 widening.

7 So we deserve not just EIS on this
8 project. We deserve an EIS on the entire urban
9 mobility vision for this region and what the
10 alternatives to a system that would basically toll
11 drivers significant amounts of money to fund freeway
12 expansions.

13 But we deserve alternatives to that. We
14 deserve a vision of a region where we manage our
15 congestion with equitable congestion tolling and use
16 that to fund biking, walking, and transit to make
17 this region the kind of livable paradise that it
18 should be.

19 And so I urge all of you to stay engaged
20 and to keep putting the pressure on ODOT to do just
21 that. We need to see the big picture, and we need
22 to plan for the big picture with a vision of justice
23 and environmental outcomes.

24 Thank you.

25 **MR. BROWN:** All right. Yeah. So --

1 **AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Am I signed up?

2 **MR. BROWN:** Yeah. I -- I didn't see you.
3 Sorry. Can we have Joan go next and then you? Is
4 that cool?

5 **AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Oh, okay.

6 **MR. BROWN:** Okay. Awesome.

7 And Paul, I'm -- I'm going to take the
8 liberty and push to the end because no one wants to
9 follow Paul Rippey, who is -- his amazing music
10 testimony. And it would be really unfair to make
11 somebody go after him.

12 It -- there's apparently a whole other
13 list of people that signed up that I don't have. So
14 I'm going to let Joan go, and I'm going to go figure
15 out what happened.

16 Joan, Eliot neighborhood -- Eliot
17 neighborhood resident. Take it away.

18 **MS. PETTIT:** Yeah. Hello. My name is
19 Joan Pettit. I live just a few blocks away from
20 here in the Eliot neighborhood. I'm the single
21 mother of two Black children that I adopted, one of
22 whom graduated from Harriet Tubman Middle School
23 four years ago.

24 When my kids and I moved to Portland 14
25 years ago, we moved to historic Albina so my kids

1 would grow up in a positive, supportive Black
2 community. This community and schools like Boise-
3 Eliot/Humboldt, Harriet Tubman Middle School, and
4 Benson High School have been true gifts to my
5 family.

6 It seems like only a few years ago that I
7 worked with other parents in inner North and
8 Northeast Portland to reopen Tubman, this school
9 here, so kids like mine could have a dedicated
10 middle school like almost every other neighborhood
11 in town. My kids have benefitted from excellent
12 Black administrators and teachers of all races who
13 have real racial and cultural competency, who don't
14 see them as stereotypes, but as students there to
15 learn.

16 Sadly, that's not always been my
17 children's experience in Oregon. If my children
18 have a positive self- image and esteem, I attribute
19 that to this Black community, to this neighborhood.

20 It's amazing that this neighborhood has
21 survived. The Oregon Highway Department devastated
22 the community when it tore a hole through Albina, a
23 scar that pollutes the air, makes our community
24 sick, and remains to this day.

25 And now ODOT wants to double down on the

1 harm to this community with an unnecessary freeway
2 expansion. Even worse, they are calling it
3 restorative justice, as if paying Black contractors
4 to further destroy their communities to hurt Black
5 children is anything other than cynical
6 exploitation.

7 **(Applause.)**

8 **MS. PETTIT:** Is the health and wellbeing
9 of my children irrelevant to ODOT? Are their lungs
10 just collateral damage?

11 Shame on ODOT for their cynical marketing,
12 for their branding and rebranding, for their lies,
13 for only seeing cars and trucks on the highway, for
14 not seeing -- really seeing -- the kids in this
15 neighborhood, in this school, who are as deserving
16 of clean air and good schools as every other child
17 in this state.

18 We need a full environmental impact
19 statement. We need to build the caps and rebuild
20 this neighborhood before we think of spending even a
21 penny more on building more freeways.

22 **(Applause.)**

23 **MR. BROWN:** I'm sorry. Somebody's at the
24 front door and I walked out to let some folks in.

25 So next up, we've got Art, followed by

1 Carrie Leonard.

2 **MR. LUAN:** Okay. Oh, let me sit down.

3 Thank you.

4 My name is Art Luan (phonetic). I've
5 lived in Portland going on 50 years. And around the
6 early 1990s, I became an advocate for our Light Rail
7 system. That was when we had just the line to
8 Gresham. So I dedicated my career towards
9 transportation system planning. And I do extensive
10 studies that helps me to present an assessment of
11 projects, whether they are worth doing or should be
12 opposed.

13 And my assessment on the Rose Quarter
14 widening is that traffic hazards will worsen. On my
15 -- my list of concerns, safety is always first, and
16 the cost is last. Traffic hazards will worsen to the
17 degree that there will be more accidents and more
18 severe accidents; more injuries; more passenger,
19 pedestrian, and bicycling fatalities.

20 And I believe ODOT knows this for a fact.
21 ODOT management, Department heads, Director Kris
22 Strickler -- they know this project, as proposed,
23 will result in deaths on the -- on the -- that
24 segment of highway and leading to the highway.

25 I -- I noticed that, well, there's been a

1 redesign that's proposed to go along with the idea
2 of capping the freeways. And I personally do not
3 support the idea of the cap.

4 And who wants to really live near a
5 freeway? I mean, the air pollution coming up from
6 those cars is not just going to stay down. There's
7 going to be a blow-up in the air, and it will be
8 unhealthy.

9 I think we need to make a -- address
10 congestion near a freeway. Then you plant trees
11 along the sides of it so that particulates that make
12 their way up can be attracted to trees and fall to
13 the ground below. And I expect that the development
14 of the area where Tubman school is now is already
15 slated for apartment block housing directly facing
16 the freeway because that's who I -- I see our Mayor
17 Wheeler as a -- nothing more than a real estate
18 broker. He's just selling out.

19 **AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Here, here.

20 **MR. LUAN:** I --

21 **(Applause.)**

22 **AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Fuck Ted Wheeler.

23 **MR. LUAN:** I have come to that -- this
24 sort of conclusion on several other projects that
25 ODOT has been a part of, that safety hazards are

1 neglected and kept from the public view. I accuse
2 ODOT and the other agencies involved, which includes
3 WSDOT, PBOT, Portland City Council, Metro Council,
4 and TriMet of crimes -- criminal, prosecutable
5 crimes that include potential and misdirection of
6 project studies to predetermine outcomes, willful
7 concealment from the public of the safety concerns,
8 reckless endangerment, and negligent homicide.

9 If they know that people are going to die
10 and they carry on with the project without -- with -
11 - without - - they can get away with it.

12 **MR. BROWN:** Art, you're -- you're a little
13 bit past your time --

14 **MR. LUAN:** I've passed my time?

15 **FEMALE SPEAKER:** You've got a minute.

16 **MR. BROWN:** You've got another remark --

17 **FEMALE SPEAKER:** Yes.

18 **MR. BROWN:** -- remark or two?

19 **MR. LUAN:** That -- those were the basic
20 statements I wanted to make about the project.

21 Oh, one last thing. There is one thing
22 that I found early on that I could support. Now,
23 it's been canceled on the new design, and it
24 includes the -- the -- that -- that Wheeler and
25 Williams and Vancouver intersection have a bicycle

1 ramp across the freeway that would have gone
2 straight up Clackamas Town Center to 7. It's part of
3 the Green Loop. That's the safe way for bicyclists
4 to make the -- this, too, not on broadly -- Broadway
5 and Weidler.

6 They can never be made safe. They're for
7 bicyclists. And all bicyclists should voice
8 opposition to that idea, that it's obviously a
9 hazard. The --

10 **MR. BROWN:** Art, we've got a couple more
11 folks that -- and I know folks --

12 **MR. LUAN:** I --

13 **MR. BROWN:** -- trying to --

14 **MR. LUAN:** I -- the one thing I said I
15 could support was the idea of relocating the
16 southbound onramp over to the Weidler where you
17 would have a downhill entrance ramp and you would
18 have plenty of good visibility. That alone was the
19 one thing since the start of this project that I was
20 able to support and -- and bring to public's
21 attention. That -- that is one safety improvement
22 that could be made. So --

23 **MR. BROWN:** Okay.

24 **MR. LUAN:** -- thank you, folks.

25 **MR. BROWN:** Thank you.

1 (Applause.)

2 MR. BROWN: All right. Just a couple more
3 left. We've got Carrie Leonard coming up next,
4 followed by Josh Hetrick, followed by Steve Brown.

5 A quick battery switch.

6 Anyone else have any notes that you want
7 to put up? Even the people filling out the
8 postcards.

9 All right. For folks that showed up a
10 little late, please note we have a bunch of
11 postcards that we are going to be mailing to
12 Governor-elect Tina Kotek as well as to dropping off
13 at ODOT's headquarters tomorrow as well as to
14 Secretary Pete Buttigieg. So if you have a chance
15 to -- if you want to write something and make --
16 make them know how you really feel, now is your
17 chance to do so. We've got stamps and everything.
18 So check out (inaudible) for that.

19 MALE SPEAKER: We are rolling.

20 MS. LEONARD: Are you ready?

21 MR. BROWN: We're good?

22 MALE SPEAKER: Yeah.

23 MR. BROWN: All right. Thank you, Carrie.

24 MS. LEONARD: You bet. And thank you for
25 letting me go before the singing.

1 **MR. BROWN:** It would be rude to let any
2 (inaudible).

3 **MS. LEONARD:** For the record, my name is
4 Carrie Leonard, and I am an Oregon resident, a
5 climate scientist, a mom, and a reluctant
6 transportation advocate.

7 I decided to come here today because
8 yesterday morning at breakfast, my 19-year-old
9 college son asked me if I had lived with impending
10 doom when I was his age. And we discussed that,
11 during the greatest nuclear threat that I have lived
12 under, it still seemed that the decision- makers
13 were honestly trying not to kill us.

14 Now we're the decision-makers. And I am
15 asking that this project -- the decisions in this
16 project be made in the trade space -- you all are
17 engineers; you know trade spaces -- be made in the
18 trade space of a full environmental impact
19 statement. And I'm asking this because I cannot
20 give up on these kids, and I cannot give up on our
21 planet.

22 Thank you.

23 **(Applause.)**

24 **MR. BROWN:** All right. Next, we have Josh
25 from the Brooklyn Action Corps, Steve Brown, and

1 then Jacob from 350PDX.

2 **MR. HETRICK:** Hi. Josh Hetrick speaking
3 for the Brooklyn Action Corps tonight. The Brooklyn
4 neighborhood is in Southeast. It's a couple of
5 miles from here, but we also have some experience
6 bearing the brunt of ODOT's poor decisions.

7 We've reviewed the supplemental
8 environment assessment, and we assert that it
9 doesn't sufficiently consider all of the project's
10 impacts. It doesn't include the study of
11 alternatives to highway expansion, including
12 congestion pricing, without adding lanes.

13 A full environmental impact statement is
14 necessary to comprehensively identify all aspects of
15 this massive proposal. And it is still a proposal.
16 ODOT wants you to believe it's a done deal, but it
17 is not.

18 We also -- we support the idea of
19 buildable caps over the highway and the Rose
20 Quarter, but this doesn't require expansion of the
21 highway at all. There's no technical reason why
22 capping the freeway has to be coupled to expanding
23 the freeway. They have simply never considered or
24 studied that as an option.

25 **(Applause.)**

1 **MR. HETRICK:** Instead of spending billions
2 widening the freeways, we believe they should focus
3 on improving safety on -- on their own roads. In
4 the last 18 months alone in the Brooklyn
5 neighborhood, multiple people have died on Powell
6 and McLoughlin Boulevards, both ODOT roads. In the
7 face of a surge of road user deaths, the opportunity
8 cost of this project is far too high when the money
9 could be better spent to save lives.

10 The freeways, which are already
11 regrettable in the Rose Quarter area, but even so,
12 they're -- they're relatively safe. And the level
13 of funds being spent here simply aren't warranted
14 under the banner of supposed safety project.

15 And we also find that ODOT has not been
16 sufficiently transparent, truthful, or responsive.
17 Important project details have been obscured or
18 hidden from the public and were only revealed after
19 continued action and pressure from community
20 members, many of whom are in this room.

21 In response to deaths on ODOT-maintained
22 roads n our own neighborhood, the Brooklyn Action
23 Corps has reached out to ODOT multiple times in
24 hopes of improving safety and avoiding further
25 needless deaths and injuries. ODOT never even

1 answered our letters.

2 These join the long list of concerns
3 raised by many other people and that we have also
4 raised at other phases of this project, including
5 negative impacts to walking, biking, and transit on
6 surface streets, ballooning cost estimates,
7 continued investment in fossil fuel infrastructure,
8 the inability to simply solve congestion through
9 expansion and air quality in this area. And given
10 these, we continue to oppose this project, and we
11 continue to demand a full EIS.

12 Thanks.

13 **(Applause.)**

14 **MR. BROWN:** All right. Next up, we have
15 Steve Brown, followed by Jacob and Lynn. And then
16 that is the end of people who have signed up, other
17 than Paul, going to be called last because he's what
18 you're all really waiting for. I'm really
19 irresponsible to make someone go after him.

20 Steve Brown, your three minutes are on the
21 clock.

22 **MR. BROWN:** Sure. Steve Brown, a Portland
23 resident. Thank you for the opportunity for this
24 presentation.

25 What I'd like to talk about is the social

1 contract between myself as a member of this
2 community and as a taxpayer and government agencies.
3 We readily and voluntarily pay taxes for
4 organizations like public health because they have a
5 stated mission and goal to keep us safe. We -- we
6 fund government -- kind of city government to
7 maintain our cities.

8 And across this country, at the federal
9 level and state levels, you have Department of
10 Transportations. They do a very critical job for
11 this nation. In -- in this complex world, the --
12 you know, they are the experts in civil engineering
13 and how do we make a highway, how do we, you know,
14 move goods from heretofore, you know, how do we
15 transport people.

16 And with that social contract, you know,
17 that's what we're expecting. And society, for that
18 work, we pay them a very handsome salary. Within
19 ODOT, I mean, you have full health insurance. You
20 probably live in a nice home. The education that you
21 received was funded by civic -- you know, city
22 government and -- and money that went into those
23 universities that you got your civil engineer
24 degrees.

25 And so we have this contract. And so now

1 we're at this -- this dilemma. It's like, why are
2 you going forward with this project when you have so
3 much backlash and -- and so many common sense?

4 Like, what are you doing?

5 And -- and I posit it's like when they're
6 -- when they're design and they're civil engineers,
7 like, every solution is a mass freeway, that's what
8 they're designed to do. They're -- they're not --
9 they didn't go to school and hear about all the
10 alternative forms of transportation.

11 So we -- we have this dilemma. And you
12 still ask, why -- why are they going forward with
13 this after so much input? And -- and a large part
14 is how organizations - - somebody -- some manager --
15 if you're managing the largest project, 1.5 billion,
16 you -- you -- you move up in status with that
17 organization. If you're a civil engineer and -- and
18 you're -- you get to be -- design the new ramps, it
19 -- once again, it aids in your credibility and your
20 financial wellbeing.

21 And so there -- there has to be checks on
22 all of our government agencies. And one of them
23 absolutely we recognize is the EIS. This -- this
24 document is designed to say, what is the impact to
25 the -- the community that we live in; what is the

1 impact to the planet?

2 So without those types of full
3 assessments, somebody can make claims of whatever,
4 and -- and it's just self-fulfilling for their
5 advancement of their personal career.

6 So I -- the -- this is a plea out to the
7 ODOT. You know, do what's required by law so you can
8 have good information and make sound decisions.

9 Thank you.

10 **(Applause.)**

11 **MR. BROWN:** All right. Next up, we have
12 Jacob. Is Jacob still here?

13 **MR. APPATUS:** Here.

14 **MR. BROWN:** Oh, awesome. Thank you,
15 Jacob.

16 Jacob, followed by Lynn.

17 Thank you for being here, Jacob. Your
18 three minutes begin now.

19 **MR. APPATUS:** Cool. Hi. My name is Jacob
20 Appatus. I'm a Portland resident, almost born, but
21 mostly raised in the city since I was two. I have
22 lived in Southwest, Southeast, and Northeast
23 Portland, and I oppose any form of freeway expansion
24 as a part of the I-5 Rose Quarter project. I also
25 support building a lid over I-5 in the Albina

1 neighborhood and demand that ODOT -- to conduct an
2 environmental impact statement on this project.

3 Among the obvious reasons, the extra lanes
4 will bring extra pollution to the city and
5 exacerbate our already disastrous climate crisis.
6 Freeway -- freeway expansion will continue to harm
7 Albina and adjacent neighborhoods by inviting
8 dangerous car traffic onto their streets.

9 I came to Harriet -- Harriet Tubman Middle
10 School by bike from the Clinton neighborhood
11 tonight, through Clinton and through Buckman and
12 through Kerns. I enjoyed a very pleasant ride via
13 the neighborhood parkways. But half of a mile of my
14 trip was on Northeast Broadway, one of the most
15 dangerous streets to bike on in Portland. And
16 that's even a street that has a bike lane.

17 Both Northeast Broadway and Weidler are
18 two busy boulevards where businesses, bikers, and
19 pedestrians exist in spite of car traffic. Are we
20 willing to harm businesses by expanding Broadway?
21 Are we willing to accept pedestrian deaths by
22 expanding Weidler?

23 If we expand I-5, the traffic has to go
24 somewhere, and it will go onto Broadway, Weidler,
25 and elsewhere. If we expand I-5, it will lead to

1 more deaths not just from pollution, not just from
2 climate change, but also from cars colliding into
3 people.

4 Once again, I ask for ODOT to forego their
5 plans to expand I-5. I also demand ODOT to conduct
6 an environmental impact statement on the Rose
7 Quarter project and to change the agency's current
8 mentality of valuing personal vehicles over people.
9 Do better.

10 Thank you.

11 **(Applause.)**

12 **MR. BROWN:** Next, we have Lynn Handlin.

13 Awesome. Thank you so much, Lynn.

14 And then after that, we'll have
15 opportunity for anyone else who has not signed up to
16 officially sign up. And then we will close with
17 Paul.

18 **MS. HANDLIN:** Hi. My name is Lynn
19 Handlin. And I'm a member of Extinction Rebellion
20 PDX, but tonight I'm just representing me.

21 And I mean, the -- it -- first of all,
22 this is so ridiculous that we're here still doing
23 this.

24 **(Applause.)**

25 **MS. HANDLIN:** Climate change is real. I'm

1 pretty sure that even all you ODOT folks understand
2 that. I assume that some of you have kids and
3 grandkids. I'm not sure why you're not considering
4 their futures, but clearly you're not.

5 It is not too late to do -- to do
6 something about climate change. I mean, it's here.
7 We've got fires and flooding. And my adult daughter
8 was turning blue with the smoke. I mean, it was --
9 anyway, we all know the problems. And it's not too
10 late to minimize the damage, but we have to act like
11 there is a climate emergency because, clearly, there
12 is, a climate justice emergency.

13 And this project is -- is just emblematic
14 of all the wrong things -- spending huge piles of
15 money doing this dangerous, ridiculous project that
16 -- that is just going to make everything worse in
17 the name of reducing commute times for some adults
18 for, you know, like, a day or two before the induced
19 demand makes it worse.

20 And you're doing this at the cost of these
21 kids' future. This is -- it -- it -- it -- this --
22 this just makes me crazy. And I have notes, and I
23 just don't even care because, like, you all have
24 heard way too many people here who are, you know --
25 know more about this. And -- and these kids who

1 have spent, like, endless hours, you know, instead
2 of, like, going and doing fun things, they are
3 learning about freeways and crap. And it's like --
4 it -- it -- it's ridiculous. But now, apparently,
5 these kids know and understand this problem better
6 than you ODOT folks do.

7 **(Applause.)**

8 **MS. HANDLIN:** So I don't really need to
9 say that much more. You absolutely need to do the
10 environmental -- environmental impact study. I
11 mean, not doing it is just morally and financially
12 bankrupt.

13 And you need to -- the lid makes sense,
14 you know, covering it. When we start to, you know,
15 wipe out some of the damage that ODOT has caused in
16 the past, that's great. And you know, congestion
17 pricing, yeah, that's all good. But honestly, what
18 you really need to do is stop widening freeways and
19 start listening to the kids.

20 Thanks.

21 **(Applause.)**

22 **MR. BROWN:** Great. We have one speaker
23 that's signed up officially left before we have Paul
24 grace us with the ballad of our times.

25 Is there anyone else that would like to

1 testify? Yeah. We've got two. Awesome. One and
2 two.

3 Yep, come on down. You're good. Yeah, go
4 for it.

5 **MS. SONSENNA:** Do I sign up?

6 **MR. BROWN:** Yeah. You're fine. I know
7 you came in. I'm -- I'm glad you're here.

8 **MS. SONSENNA:** Thanks.

9 **MR. BROWN:** I feel bad that I had
10 accidentally locked you inside --

11 **MS. SONSENNA:** No.

12 **MR. BROWN:** -- the building. So --

13 **MS. SONSENNA:** No, no. Thank you. I
14 appreciate you -- you opening the door and hosting
15 this gathering since they won't do it for us.

16 All right. My name is Pancepa Sonsense
17 (phonetic). I am an environmental studies major
18 from University of Oregon, studied sustainable
19 development and policies.

20 And something I wanted to bring across was
21 that the city was intended to design -- intended-ly
22 design to be landlocked. The freeway was landlocked
23 for the public system to be enhanced. Therefore,
24 the funding should be allocated towards green
25 infrastructures, such as the TriMet system, such as

1 bike lanes, and walkways, especially targeting
2 towards Albina communities where there is already
3 low car ownership.

4 It doesn't really make sense to justify
5 putting a whole freeway for people who don't really
6 have cars versus people who can walk or may use
7 wheelchairs or bikes. Therefore, you're already
8 increasing the -- the demographics who can use these
9 spaces.

10 So I -- I ask for you to reconsider the
11 design, to maybe look at the TriMet operation's
12 headquarters on the Southeast 17th and Center. They
13 have a really great design where they have a TriMet
14 system in the middle with vegetations and art that
15 also center historical pieces. And then they also
16 have cars, big car lanes that's also paired with
17 bike lanes and also sidewalks.

18 And I think that's a really good reference
19 for potential way to help the community and do
20 better for -- for a more resilient and sustainable
21 environment. And you're already a leading sector
22 for polluting the environment.

23 So by enhance -- by increasing
24 infrastructure to -- to pollute more doesn't really
25 decrease your greenhouse gas emission in any way at

1 all.

2 So yeah, I really -- I would call for,
3 also, a public outreach as well because I don't
4 think the -- the public or the Albina community
5 actually know that this project is actually going on
6 and as well as the environmental impact assessment
7 as well.

8 And I thank you again for hosting this.
9 And yeah, I'm signing off.

10 Thank you.

11 **(Applause.)**

12 **MR. BROWN:** Good evening. Three minutes
13 start now.

14 **MR. VALO:** Hello. My name is Tegan Valo.
15 I'm here representing B-Line Urban Delivery. We are
16 a sustainable, small, local delivery and freight
17 company.

18 I submitted a letter yesterday that goes
19 further into the points that -- that we want to
20 make. But just quickly, I wanted to hit on one
21 point that really came to mind from listening to
22 other people's testimony.

23 Well, first, as context, one of our goals
24 as a company, among other things, is to reduce
25 congestion and pollution by performing deliveries

1 that would have otherwise been done by typical vans
2 and trucks and our electric freight tricycles.

3 And the point I want to hit on is that I
4 categorially reject any narrative that pits the
5 needs of pedestrians, cyclists, the environment, and
6 the citizens who live here against the needs of
7 freight trunking -- trucking and the economy.

8 **(Applause.)**

9 **MR. VALO:** Those needs are not mutually
10 exclusive. We've shown that firsthand. Our impact
11 reporting shows that, in 2021 alone, our electric
12 freight tricycles prevented over 500,000 pounds of
13 CO2 from entering the atmosphere and reduced over
14 320,000 traffic miles that would have been done --

15 **(Applause.)**

16 **MR. VALO:** -- by traditional vehicles.

17 So if you want to improve freight mobility
18 through our region, there are far cheaper and more
19 effective ways to do so than expanding I-5. And I
20 do believe that's a noble goal, to be improving
21 freight mobility through our region. But we can do
22 that by spending money on transit, cycling, and
23 pedestrian infrastructure that will get cars off the
24 road. And we can do it, as many other people have
25 said, by just doing the congestion pricing. We do

1 not need to build more lanes to fix this problem.

2 Thank you.

3 **(Applause.)**

4 **MR. BROWN:** All right. The moment we've
5 all been waiting for.

6 Paul?

7 **MR. RIPPEY:** No overselling it here.

8 **MR. BROWN:** No, I'm not overselling.

9 **MR. RIPPEY:** That was five years ago.

10 Thank you. I'm Paul Rippey, and I live in
11 St. Johns. And five years ago, I was -- I have to
12 stand up because I'm doing this.

13 So five years ago, I was reading about
14 expanding the freeway. And it seemed like such an
15 insane, ridiculous idea that -- I mean, seriously, I
16 was like, what -- why are we doing this? Why are we
17 wasting our time talking about this?

18 And so I called up to get a -- get an
19 appointment to testify to the City Council. And I
20 knew I wanted to sing a song. But of all the
21 different reasons not to widen, I thought -- I
22 wasn't sure what I was going to do because I could
23 talk about how it ruins the character of Portland by
24 putting people in cars instead of public transport.
25 Or I could have talked about the inherent racism of

1 inter -- of inter -- you know, urban highways. Or I
2 could have talked about how it undercuts all the
3 public transportation. I could have talked about
4 the fact that the planet is dying and you want to
5 build more concrete highways with more cars.

6 But I said, no, I've only got three
7 minutes. So let's get something simple that
8 everybody can understand, and that's the principle
9 that it doesn't work. So I said - - because I
10 wasn't sure -- I mean, the City Council listened to
11 everything else, but they might not have known about
12 induced demand. So that's why I wrote -- so I wrote
13 this song.

14 The thing we need to understand is induced
15 demand. In the '60s, we built the interstate. In
16 the '70s and '80s, it was looking kind of great. In
17 the '90s and otts, we said, well, let's build
18 another lane. And now, my God, they want to do it
19 again. But the thing we need to understand is
20 induced demand.

21 Now, a lot of folks like to drive around
22 town, and they can't help notice that things have
23 slowed down. But adding more lanes is never done
24 because, if we build them --

25 **(IN UNISON):** They will come.

1 **MR. RIPPEY:** And the thing we need to
2 understand is induced demand.

3 I wish Tom McCall was still alive. He
4 tore down Harbor Drive. He was a Republican, by the
5 way. I'm just saying. And now Dennis Buchanan has
6 gone away. He blocked the Mt. Hood Expressway.
7 People of courage, people of goodwill, I hope we got
8 that kind of leader still. But the thing we need to
9 understand is --

10 **(IN UNISON):** Induced demand.

11 **MR. RIPPEY:** And of course, we'll need
12 more buses and MAX. That's just transportation
13 facts. But the way to get the highway lobby off of
14 our backs is with a comprehensive congestion tax.

15 **(IN UNISON):** And the thing we need to
16 understand is induced demand.

17 **MR. RIPPEY:** In the '60s, we built the
18 interstate. Let's stop the madness now before it's
19 too late. And the thing --

20 **(IN UNISON):** -- we need to understand is
21 induced demand.

22 **MR. RIPPEY:** And that's it. Just I want
23 to say if the -- if any of the Sunrise people that
24 are here, I just -- there's no group of people I
25 love more than you guys. I just feel --

1 (Applause.)

2 MR. RIPPEY: I sang and cried. When I
3 heard you all singing, it made me cry, so if any --
4 if any of you are going to be singing, possibly, I'm
5 -- I'll be in --

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. BROWN: All right. Thank you,
8 everybody.

9 We've got some very, very short things to
10 finish with if I can find the right page. We have a
11 lot of people to thank really quick -- (inaudible),
12 Emily Dice, Joan Pettit, Eric Vandal (phonetic),
13 Bryan Dennis, Nakisha Nathan, Mary (inaudible),
14 Allan Rudwick, Allan Kessler (phonetic), Gevan --
15 did I get your name last night? How do I pronounce
16 your last name?

17 MR. GEVAN: Gevan.

18 MR. BROWN: Gevan. All right. Zack Grace
19 (phonetic), John Fervay (phonetic), Dan Alfred.
20 Thank you so much for our tech team --

21 (Applause.)

22 MR. BROWN: And just because we don't have
23 all of ODOT's money, we can still have an amazing
24 public comment period. This is more tech than ODOT
25 had. A \$1.4 billion freeway expansion --

1 (Simultaneous speaking.)

2 MR. BROWN: -- now providing more public
3 comment opportunity than they are.

4 Please, if you haven't already, go see Viv
5 about those postcards. Every one of those postcards
6 will be hand- or postal-delivered to Pete Buttigieg,
7 Governor-elect Kotek, or those on her team.

8 We've got all our Post-it notes here.
9 It's looking a little one-sided so far. If anyone
10 would like to change the (inaudible), please do so.

11 And who here has already submitted a
12 comment online? All right. That's all universal,
13 and it's amazing.

14 Who here is having at least one other
15 person to submit public testimony?

16 (Simultaneous speaking.)

17 MR. BROWN: We know what we've got to do
18 between now and midnight tomorrow --
19 nomorefreewayspx.com/lidsnotlanes. It's on the QR
20 code of the stuff that's been handed out all around
21 here.

22 And I'm not going to renew all of the No
23 More Freeways as testifying, but you will be able to
24 see it tomorrow. Chris, Joe, and I are showing up
25 at ODOT's headquarters, or their consultant's

1 headquarters, with a thumb drive of about 10 gig of
2 -- of files.

3 And Chris swung by their offices a couple
4 days ago, and they were not really thrilled that we
5 were showing up with 10 gig of public testimony and
6 comment, both these type of events, but also all of
7 our quantitative analysis of all the spots where
8 they're lying to us about air pollution, climate
9 change. There is a lot that ODOT is about to
10 receive, and you'll be able to read our remarks
11 there.

12 Thank you so much. It's really an honor
13 and a blessing that so many people care about this.
14 As someone that's been doing this work for the last
15 five years, it -- I can't express how much gratitude
16 I feel seeing so many people continue to show up and
17 continue to shout that climate leaders don't widen
18 freeways.

19 Thank you all very much.

20 **(Applause.)**

21 **(WHEREUPON, the hearing was concluded.)**

22

23

24

25

1 CERTIFICATE

2
3 I, Karynn S. Willman, do hereby certify that
4 the proceeding named herein was professionally transcribed
5 on the date set forth in the certificate herein; that I
6 transcribed all testimony adduced and other oral
7 proceedings had in the foregoing matter; and that the
8 foregoing transcript pages constitute a full, true, and
9 correct record of such testimony adduced and oral
10 proceeding had and of the whole thereof.

11
12 IN WITNESS HEREOF, I have hereunto set my
13 hand this 6th day of February, 2023.

14
15
16 

17
18
19 _____
20 Karynn S. Willman
21
22
23
24
25

<p> <hr/> \$ \$1.4 2:8 32:12 47:16 85:25 \$1.45 25:20 \$1.5 7:15 35:19 41:4 \$10 46:5 \$20 6:14 6:17 18:4 18:10 \$30 18:1 18:2 \$450 7:12 7:16 25:18 \$8 58:5 \$800 25:19 <hr/> 1 <hr/> 1.3 40:7 1.4 50:15 1.45 55:4 1.5 32:12 72:15 10 21:21 87:1 87:5 10-lane 23:22 113 43:5 12,000 31:15 12,500 40:1 120,000 25:5 13 33:14 39:21 135,000 25:4 14 33:14 47:20 59:24 16 13:16 </p>	<p> 15:12 43:4 160 23:21 24:1 160-foot-wide 23:21 27:25 16-year-old 15:12 46:23 17 47:21 170 5:2 17th 79:12 17-year-old 42:18 43:19 43:24 44:4 18 69:4 19 15:15 1950s 5:10 6:5 1962 17:11 1980s 6:8 1990s 62:6 19-year-old 67:8 <hr/> 2 <hr/> 2,000 8:15 20 37:7 200,000 24:15 2007 18:22 2010 31:23 57:5 2012 57:5 57:11 2014 55:22 2015 53:9 53:13 </p>	<p> 2017 7:10 7:12 7:18 8:9 57:16 2018 6:13 2019 8:12 8:13 10:19 18:14 2020 9:7 38:21 2021 9:15 9:23 47:20 81:11 2022 10:11 2023 2:3 37:19 2030 15:14 15:14 217 58:2 218 54:21 23 15:14 25 25:1 26 54:20 26-218 54:23 <hr/> 3 <hr/> 3 2:3 11:11 34:17 35:3 300 17:13 30-pound 35:14 31 24:12 320,000 81:14 34 49:16 35 44:19 350PDX 68:1 </p>	<p> 365 5:10 <hr/> 4 <hr/> 4,000 31:16 40 14:1 45:14 450 5:12 45-day 8:13 10:20 47 24:12 30:8 <hr/> 5 <hr/> 50 62:5 500,000 24:15 81:12 5th 55:22 <hr/> 6 <hr/> 60s 83:15 84:17 <hr/> 7 <hr/> 7 65:2 70 11:14 21:25 34:24 70,000 53:13 70s 83:16 <hr/> 8 <hr/> 80s 83:16 <hr/> 9 <hr/> 90s 83:17 91 8:16 95 43:6 <hr/> A <hr/> Aaron 2:11 </p>
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