

Testimony on Portland Air Toxics Health Emergency
Danielle Nichols, Portland resident
February 23, 2016

Chair Vega Pederson and Members of the committee:

My name is Danielle Nichols, and I am a resident of the NE Portland Woodlawn neighborhood. ~~I bought my home there in 2013. Since then,~~ Since I bought my home almost 3 years ago I have been subject to repeated hospital trips, in home breathing treatments, and this summer my doctor has suggested we undergo a drastic form of biologic immunotherapy to get me to breathe better.

I had asthma as a child, but tThese severe problems did not start until I moved into my home, which, I learned, ranks falls within in the worst 11-15% of air quality in the United States of America. We are downwind of Esco Corp's metal factory and, in range of a highly industrial district where that manufactures glass, paint and other chemicals and other manufacturing takes place. We're also, and strikingly close to the Colombia Industrial railway. This has created what now feels like a chemical soup, right in my backyard.

I originally moved to Portland 16 years ago because for I thought it was a healthy and environmentally conscientious city. In 2015 alone its people over profit ethic, and its clean air, trees, and defense of the individual over any business interest. I have been went to the hospital for near -death breathing incidents 4 times in 2015 -, and two more would means I am a candidate for social security benefits as a disabled person. Most days, I just try to attend to life – I hook myself up to a breathing machine, I take medicine, I take body-wrecking steroids. The attacks I have suffered mean that I cannot move from my bed, cannot climb stairs, cannot attend to the basic duties of caring for my three children. In fact, one – and I try to continue that so my children don't have to. Because one or more of my children have missed school 2-timestwice in the past year to attend to me after such attacks, as these breathing incidents mean I cannot move from my bed, cannot climb stairs, and cannot attend to the basic duties of caring for three small childr.en. No mother wants her children to take care of her at such a young age when she should be able to take care of them. It has become increasingly clear that Portland's people over profit ethic is rapidly disappearing.

While you may not remember my face, or my name – try to remember the electric purple hair! – and know that I am one of your citizens, one with a lowered life expectancy due to the air I breathe. I want to stay in my community, but if I do I have 15ish more years to raise my sons, to live, to fulfill my dreams – lest my family be forced to move outside of Portland, taking our resources, know how, and financial investment with us. If I stay – I fear that I will die – at least, die quite a bit earlier than I had hoped if I lived somewhere else. The medicine I am required to take to help me breathe has increased my heart attack risk by 700% -; and at 34 I already

have blood pressure issues. I have to take ~~this the~~ medicine to breathe ~~but~~— the medicine is killing my heart. ~~A girl's gotta do, but a girl can also be really frustrated and angry.~~ This isn't how it should be.

I have always wanted to call ~~Portland Oregon~~ home, but due to the negligence of the DEQ, ~~and inadequate air quality laws~~, I am being forced to consider leaving so that I can live ~~a longer and better life~~, instead of exist under a barrage of medical experiments.

I urge ~~this legislature Portland City Council~~ to take ~~immediate~~ action ~~immediately~~ on our air ~~quality~~ issues, ~~lest I'm just another casualty to the hundreds of at risk people in Portland who cannot survive with the status quo.~~ ~~My story is one of many, many of the sick kids with attentive parents who can't be here, because they are hunched over a breathing machine — AGAIN — and the parents who can't be here because their children are doing the same. Asthma is the most increasing disease in the US, and it is directly linked to air quality — please don't let Portland be yet another example by which asthmatic parents and asthmatic children must run from a city that attempts to make an ecological example, because we literally cannot breathe in your city due to a lack of regulation.~~

Those of us who have weakened lungs, ~~at we are growing by the day~~, are literally suffocating. ~~We need you to intervene.~~ ~~Do something, or we all lose.~~