

From:

Esme D. Miller

What do you want to tell legislators about the proposed \$1.9 Billion Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion and Oregon's transportation system?

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Esme Miller, I'm a Piedmont resident, a constituent of senator Frederick, and a member of Portland Neighbors Welcome. This written testimony recapitulates my oral testimony at the 12/2/23 listening session at PCC Cascade.

I'd like to ask the committee, in considering the Rose Quarter freeway expansion: where do you expect all these cars to come from?

When we tell the younger generation to just drive further out into Clark County to find affordable housing, it is obviously destructive of family and community, and perpetuates the displacement of BIPOC and low-income Portlanders, but it also requires more driving, more traffic, and more emissions. What if the state were willing to spend something on the scale of the \$1.9 billion anticipated cost of the Rose Quarter project on affordable housing? Imagine how much of the I-5 commute traffic would evaporate if everyone who wanted to could find affordable housing in the city!

In the world we are living in, the city of Portland will continue to receive queer young adult refugees fleeing persecution in their rural and red state hometowns. We have a moral obligation to plan for a city that will be able to house them. I feel this deeply because 30 years ago I was that refugee.

You can tell me about the constitutional restriction on the state highway fund, but that restriction was passed in 1979 as part of Reagan's tax revolt, premised on racist resentment of BIPOC people benefiting from public services. It can and must be changed.

I have a daughter who just graduated from Jefferson High School, who is away at her first semester of college. In a decade or so, when she is ready to have babies, I want her to be able to afford to live in the neighborhood. But also, I want to be living in a world that has been spared enough of our looming climate disaster, that she would even consider bringing babies into it.