

From:

Jacob Apenes

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

Hello Co Chairs Frederick and Nathanson,

For the record, my name is Jacob Apenes. I am 25 years old, have spent my entire life in Portland, and am an organizer with Sunrise PDX. I do the work of climate organizing because of immense fear. Fear of forest fires and smoke seasons. Fear of once-in-a-lifetime flooding. Fear of a future on an uninhabitable planet. I organize, because fighting for a planet that my generation and future generations can live on keeps me sane.

Isn't that crazy? That it keeps me sane to consistently think about climate chaos? I knock on neighbors' doors every weekend and ask them about their transportation choices so I can advocate for improved transit. I read articles and watch videos about urban planning so I can dream of a state where 40% of our emissions don't come from transportation.

I am so insane about being sane that last January, I biked 40 minutes, in the dark and in pouring rain, across state owned highways like MLK, to sit in a middle school that's next to a polluting freeway and tell a camera to cancel the Rose Quarter freeway expansion. ODOT wouldn't have a public hearing about the freeway expansion, so I had to talk to a camera instead. This was the first time I had ever given testimony, and I was forced to talk to a machine instead of the people in charge of these terrible projects.

I hope you understand when I say that the people in charge of our state's transportation system need to take climate change seriously. I like to believe that we all understand this, that the fight against the climate crisis will require everyone, especially those in power, to fight.

We all want a stable climate and livable planet, and we all want the freedom and ease to explore any part of our beautiful state. We can have both by investing in public transportation, by prioritizing high-capacity intercity travel options like express buses and trains, and by funding active transportation infrastructure so small trips can be made safely without a vehicle.

We can do all of this, and more, if our state's transportation dollars went to these projects instead of to freeway expansions.

Please do not spend your time and effort trying to build 10 lanes of traffic. Please ensure tolling revenue is spent on equitable transportation options, not freeway lanes. Please conduct an environmental impact statement for the Rose Quarter Improvement Project.

Thank you for listening, I wish you the best with your work.