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Submitted written testimony to the Joint Committee on Transportation for the 6/4 Roadshow Hearing:

Hello committee members,

My name is Je Amaechi, I'm in District 22, the Eliot neighborhood to be exact. I am the Organizing Director at Unite Oregon. I am also on the boards of Imagine Black and Oregon Walks.

I am here today to ask that the 2025 transportation package prioritize investments that reflect the community's needs.

First and foremost, we need to focus on creating safer streets. Traffic deaths in Oregon have surged dramatically, increasing 73% from 2010 to 2022. Last year, Portland saw a 30-year high in traffic fatalities. This alarming trend highlights the urgent need for comprehensive safety improvements in our transportation system.

It's imperative that we invest in infrastructure that supports walking, cycling, and public transit, so that everyone can move safely and efficiently without the need to own a car. This not only enhances safety but also contributes to reducing our carbon footprint, in line with the state's climate goals.

We're at a critical juncture. The past 12 months have been the hottest on record, a clear sign of impending climate chaos. Remember the heat dome event in 2021, which tragically claimed 72 lives? Or how about this year's ice storms that took 17 more lives. We must act now to mitigate these kind of extreme weather events that are becoming all too frequent and all too deadly. We must reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The proposed \$1.9 billion Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion really shows the need to rethink our transportation priorities.

In Portland and all over the country, we have seen the detrimental effects of prioritizing freeways over community health and well-being. The Black community of which I am apart has suffered enough from these kind of infrastructure projects.

And at the end of the day, it won't even alleviate congestion. Just ask LA what "just one more lane bruh" does to a city. Induced demand is real!

Instead of expanding freeways, which leads to increased pollution and traffic fatalities, we need to be investing in improving local streets. We need transportation solutions that prioritize clean air and healthy communities.

One such solution is the Safe Routes to School Infrastructure program. In Oregon, children are required to walk or roll to school if they live within a mile, and yet many students don't have sidewalks in their neighborhood! Kids often have to walk on the shoulder of roads which is obviously very dangerous. We have a moral obligation to provide children a safe way to get to school. The Safe Routes to School Infrastructure fund is currently funded at an amount that desperately falls short of what is needed. Please expand this fund so any city or town that wants safe routes to their schools has the resources to make it so. Every child in our state deserves a safe path to education.

In conclusion, the budget we set shows where our priorities lie. If we continue to prioritize freeway expansions [and car infrastructure] over community health, safety, and sustainability, it speaks volumes about the state's values. The 2025 transportation package should commit statewide revenues to programs that benefit everyone. By building climate-friendly neighborhoods and supporting active transportation options, we can ensure that all residents have all the tools they need to thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration.