



**Date:** Monday, December 16, 2019

**To:** Oregon Governor Kate Brown  
Oregon Transportation Commission  
Kris Strickler, Director, Oregon Department of Transportation

**CC:** Metro Council President Lynn Peterson  
Multnomah County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson  
Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler  
Portland City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly  
Portland Public Schools Board Chair Rita Moore  
Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek  
Megan Channell, Oregon Department of Transportation

**From:** Aaron Brown, No More Freeways Coalition  
Anna Kemper, Sunrise Movement PDX  
Marilyn Fleener, Sunrise Movement PDX

**Subject:** Response to Governor Brown's request for postponement of OTC's scheduled December vote on \$500m Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion

We are delighted to hear that Governor Brown is listening to the rapidly growing number of community leaders, elected officials and climate justice activists raising significant concerns about Oregon Department of Transportation's (ODOT's) proposed \$500 million Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion in the backyard of Harriet Tubman Middle School. We are grateful the Governor reaffirmed that it's impossible (despite ODOT's continued intentions) to simply build our way out of traffic congestion, air pollution or carbon emissions. Her encouragement of further study and implementation of congestion pricing is commendable, and we are also pleased Governor Brown acknowledges the need for ODOT to collaborate with ongoing community-led initiatives for justice in the restoration of the neighborhood. The agency has obviously failed to meaningfully partner with crucial local stakeholders relevant to the successful rebirth of this neighborhood, which aspires to heal from a previous generation's racist trespasses and policy mistakes that cause harm to this day.

In light of the Governor's letter, **No More Freeways continues to demand that ODOT conduct a rigorous Environmental Impact Statement** that could clarify whether ODOT is telling the truth in their claims that the Rose Quarter Freeway



Expansion would somehow be the first in America that reduced traffic congestion, lowered carbon emissions or improved air pollution. Our independent analysis of ODOT's traffic projections revealed numerous, easily-challenged assumptions and discrepancies with significant implications to the project's public health and climate considerations. The public deserves nothing short of full accountability, transparency and honest assessment of these impacts for a proposed half billion dollar investment in fossil-fuel infrastructure on the dawn of our hastily arriving climate emergency.

Our request for a full Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed freeway expansion was echoed this spring during the public comment period by Portland Public Schools, Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, Representative Karin Power, Business for a Better Portland, Portland Audubon Society, Albina Vision Trust, the Eliot Neighborhood Association, Neighbors for Clean Air, Portland's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committees, The Street Trust, Oregon Environmental Council and thousands of Oregonians across the state. They were joined by Speaker Tina Kotek, Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson, Senator Michael Dembrow, Representative Rob Nosse, Metro Council President Lynn Peterson, Mayor Ted Wheeler and 1000 Friends of Oregon this past week, as well as hundreds of Oregonians who sent postcards to the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) directly.

No More Freeways and Sunrise PDX look forward to testifying at the OTC hearing in Lebanon tomorrow to ask Commissioners to their faces what leadership action they intend to take to address ODOT's institutional complicity in exacerbating the urgent climate emergency currently unfolding. 40% of Oregon's carbon emissions come from transportation, and in the months and years ahead we fully intend to hold Governor Kate Brown, ODOT Director Kris Stickler and OTC Chair Bob Van Brocklin accountable for the impact these massive proposed freeway expansions will have on the health and well being of current and future Oregonians. Building a Green New Deal requires retiring the grey old deal - our bright, sustainable future of walkable communities and frequent, reliable, accessible transit can only be funded by the divestment of costly, outdated, polluting fossil-fuel infrastructure like the multiple freeway expansions ODOT has proposed across the region.

Climate leaders simply don't widen freeways, and we sure hope in the decade to come the state of Oregon can still be counted on to deliver innovative, thoughtful, and honest environmental leadership.

Our future depends on it.