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Testimony to **Portland City Council** on the **Shelter to Housing Continuum Project, Recommended Draft**

I realized that homelessness is a very complex problem and that all residents of the City should have access to some minimum level of housing. Everyone needs to be treated with dignity. I also agree that several of the provisions in the S2HC proposal are a step in the right direction -- but it has a few serious flaws, especially with regard to the establishment of temporary outdoor shelters. Establishing an "organized" outdoor tent-city (or similar set-up) does NOT provide the dignity people are calling for. Providing minimal basic housing must include more than a tent. How can a person live with dignity unless he/she has access not only to shelter from the weather, but also a way to clean their body and clean their clothes. There also needs to be minimal trash pick-up and a way to store and prepare meals (or to easily obtain prepared food). Ideally, basic shelter also includes a way to get warm, and stay warm (and dry). It is difficult, if not impossible, to provide these basic needs in outdoor shelters. Where is the dignity in an outdoor shelter without addressing these basic needs? Just changing the zoning, without other measures adopted at the same time, to assure that "organized" shelters (indoors and outdoors) meet minimum standards in the way they are built and operated is a recipe for disaster. The way this proposal is worded, it sounds like ANYONE can form a nonprofit of any kind and put up a group outdoor shelter on their property, with no minimum requirement of any kind. There is nothing in the proposal that would make sure that these shelters are not clustered in existing low-income pockets within the city. Staff keep saying that just because most of the vacant or under-utilized land is in East Portland, doesn't mean that area will end up with the majority of the shelters (indoor or outdoor, permanent or temporary). But, there is no guarantee that won't happen either -- in the zoning code, or in other documents.

Testimony is presented without formatting.