

Jessica Wiege

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

I am writing to please ask the city council to refrain from rezoning our public parks in such a way that allows homeless camping. For those of us that live in the downtown area especially, these parks are our only green spaces and places to gather outside. It seems ridiculous that our community needs to write testimony to explain to you the obvious issues with this proposal, and the deterioration of our parks and neighborhoods that would follow such a move. Why would you ignore the safety and sanitation hazards inherent in this plan? The citizens of Portland recently passed a bill that will collect billions of dollars over the next 10 years to put towards solutions for the ever growing homeless issue. I suggest you utilize that money in ways that make sense and are effective, rather than continue to add to the quality of life issues you have already allowed to compound for the last few years by commandeering our public spaces so that they are not usable to anyone but campers. If you rezone, this is exactly what will happen. Rather than just allowing even MORE camping in the city, which just perpetuates the problem, why don't you systemically address the underlying issues? In the meantime, utilize some preexisting empty buildings to actually give people shelter and an organized system to aid them in getting back on their feet. Frankly your inability to address the homeless issue in Portland now for several years is why more and more space is needed for campsites. The taxpayers of Portland are tired of footing the bill and suffering the consequences of your inadequate handling of this topic.

Testimony is presented without formatting.