

Robin Sack

#267736 | March 15, 2021

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

Hello Commissioners, My name is Robin Sack and I am a tenant in Northeast Portland. I am a youth climate organizer with Sunrise PDX and I urge you to vote YES on the Shelter to Housing Continuum with the recommended policy amendments proposed by the housing justice organization Portland: Neighbors Welcome. S2HC will allow our houseless neighbors to have safe, stable places to live. I want to live in a city that has the courage to defy destructive market logic and defend safe, stable housing as a basic human right - that is why we must pass the Shelter to Housing Continuum. In addition to passing the policy, we must allow outdoor shelters on some open spaces, as a blanket ban could make certain established camps and villages, such as Right 2 Dream Too, illegal. It is also important to maintain existing RV and tiny house housing that would be made illegal without the amendments to this policy. You must do everything in your power to guarantee that the already unhoused do not face additional instability due to this code change, especially in the midst of a global health crisis. The systems that seek to grow profit above all else ignore and blame human suffering on the individual when in reality it is these systems that are flawed. These systems affect frontline communities disproportionately compared to communities that perpetuate the systems. In passing S2HC, the City of Portland will make it clear that it intends to put people and the planet before profits and the status quo that has devastated both the climate and the stability of our communities. Housing justice is racial justice is climate justice - we cannot have one without the other. I feel frustrated about the present and anxious about the future. Often I find myself getting caught up in conversations being held by adults about houselessness in our city, with things being said like, "It's so frightening to walk by those people on the streets!" and "When will the city deal with them?" This frustrates me because people saying things like this do not understand that in reality, it is the city's fault that houseless people are in rough situations. The city is not doing enough to prove that they care, to change the systems that are disproportionately affecting the lives of our houseless neighbors in countless negative ways. I am asking one of the same questions, but from a different perspective. When will the city hold themselves accountable and proceed to change the harmful systems we have in place? I will use my frustration in this present to urge you to do something positive for the lives of our houseless neighbors and enact real change. I will use my frustration to try and eradicate my anxiety about the future. I will use my frustration to tell you that what is happening currently around the houselessness crisis in our city is not effective. But S2HC will be. The Shelter to Housing Continuum will help keep people from sliding into homelessness and offers them safety and dignity if they already lack housing. As the climate crisis unfolds,

Portland will have an influx of climate refugees coming into our region, and vulnerable Portlanders will have to navigate worsening floods, fires, heat waves, and droughts. The City, region, and its residents must be proactive in planning for the climate crisis, as there is no time to waste in expanding housing and shelter options to meet present and future needs. S2HC is a good step in the direction toward a sustainable future for everyone in our communities. I urge you to vote YES and include all amendments recommended by Portland: Neighbors Welcome. Thank you, Robin Sack

Testimony is presented without formatting.