

March 17, 2021

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Kris Blackmore and I am a resident of the King Neighborhood. I'm writing to express my support for the Shelter to Housing Continuum Project — I support the proposed amendments put forward by Portland: Neighbors Welcome and want to emphasize one in particular: while I fully support the legalization of tiny houses and RVs on private property, please do not upend the lives of people who already live in them by requiring costly sewer connections or the installation of a campground-style post for electricity and water.

I live in a tiny house on wheels with my husband in a friend's backyard in Northeast Portland. We love it even after a year of quarantine. We love it because after years of being rent burdened and housing insecure we finally had the opportunity to have an affordable place of our own. We now have a stable place to call home, we're close to our neighbors, and we love our community.

We invested a lot into making it happen and spent hundreds of hours researching utility systems, including how to properly dispose of grey and blackwater. We consulted with multiple tiny home builders and discovered that hooking into the sewer would cost tens of thousands of dollars. Building a post for electricity and water was another \$7,000 - \$9,000. This was entirely unmanageable, so we opted for a state-of-the-art composting and gray water recapturing system that is more environmentally-friendly and disaster resilient than city sewage systems. We followed the cities own guidelines for occupied RVs and tiny homes on wheels on private property for our electricity and water connections — these guidelines did not include installing a post.

If the city requires RV's to connect to the sewer or build electric and water posts, lives will be displaced and I will be one of them. The reality is that the people who live in structures on wheels don't tend to have thousands of dollars at our disposal to conform to these new standards. Additionally, this would create a future barrier for property owners. Wealthy residents might find it's worth the long-term investment, but the cost will be out of reach for low and middle-income homeowners who will lose out on the opportunity to offset their mortgage payments through additional rental income. It will also be an unnecessary barrier to anyone who wants to allow temporary parking on their property — like giving a family member who just lost their job a place to park a camper while they get back on their feet. Having options like this available can make all the difference between having safe, stable housing and illegally camping on the street.

I completely understand concerns about sanitation, but I fear this measure would ultimately result in a de facto ban on tiny homes throughout the city. There should be a suite of permanent and temporary options for dealing with grey and blackwater that are appropriate for the dwelling, the space it occupies, and the environment. Options should include community dump sites, mobile pumping units, and recapturing, incinerating or composting systems.

Thank you,

Kris Blackmore