

## **The Oregonian**

# **Portland police no longer allowing ICE agents to train at bureau center**

*By Maxine Bernstein  
September 26, 2019*

The Portland Police Bureau has halted a two-year contract that allowed federal immigration enforcement agents to use the firing range and classroom space at its training center in Northeast Portland.

The contract was signed in 2018 with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and was expected to run through August 2020. On Sept. 19, Portland Deputy Police Chief Jami Resch sent the federal agency a letter, terminating part of the agreement for use of the training center on Northeast Airport Way.

The decision affects only Homeland Security's agents with Immigration and Customs Enforcement, not its agents from the Homeland Security Investigations Unit who don't enforce immigration laws, according to the Police Bureau.

Members of the Portland chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America, a coalition called Close the Concentration Camps, along with Portland City Commissioner JoAnn Hardesty challenged the contract, citing the city's and state's sanctuary law, which directs police not to help federal agents enforce immigration policies.

"After an internal review, the Portland Police Bureau is no longer allowing use of its Training Division facility by a portion of the United States Department of Homeland Security because the use of the facility must be consistent with the City's values and Federal, State, and local laws," the Police Bureau said in a statement Wednesday.

Under a city resolution, the city of Portland prohibits the use of city funds, personnel or equipment to enforce federal immigration law.

"The use of PPB's training facility by other law enforcement agencies should be consistent with City values," Chief Danielle Outlaw said in the statement.

"A mistake was made due to miscommunication during the contract approval process. When the oversight was brought to our attention, we took immediate action," she said.

Members of the Portland Democratic Socialists of America and Close the Concentration Camps coalition applauded ending a contract they said was approved without public oversight. The groups alerted Hardesty to their concerns in early September and were surprised by the quick results, said Evan Burchfield, a spokesman for the local chapter of Democratic Socialists of America

"That the city of Portland, a supposed sanctuary city, took money from ICE and allowed this contract to go into effect is disturbing and wrong," said a statement by the two advocacy groups.

The bureau's training center was funded through a \$15 million bond measure. The bureau leases the center to other law enforcement agencies to help offset the costs and contracts with 38 agencies to use it. Requests are examined by the city attorney's office, according to the bureau.

In 2018, the city signed contracts with the Department of Homeland Security to allow its law enforcement agents to use the training center. That included agents from ICE and from the Homeland Security Investigations branch.

Portland police said they were informed last week about the potential conflict with the city's and state's sanctuary policies and suspended Homeland Security's use of the training center to allow for a review of the contract.

"After review, action was taken to cancel the contract with Enforcement and Removal Operations," according to the Police Bureau statement.

Public records suggest the contract was to range from \$49,500 to \$94,500. It's unclear how the contract payment will be altered in line with the recent development.

According to Matt McNally, a community outreach coordinator in Hardesty's office, the Police Bureau had received \$13,748 toward the contract to train the Homeland Security department's immigration and customs enforcement agents. In addition, the federal agency so far has been billed \$10,320 for use of the bureau's training center by the department's Homeland Security investigators, according to police Lt. Tina Jones.

Hardesty's office had brought the concerns to the attention of the mayor, the Police Bureau and the city attorney's office.

"We greatly appreciate the work of DSA to help terminate the contract with ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations," McNally wrote to the group on Monday. "Without you bringing it to our attention, it could have very well gone unnoticed. Our office believes that in no case should a sanctuary city be receiving funding from organizations as diametrically opposed to the values of sanctuary, such as ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations. Thanks to your organization's work, we can now say that Portland will not be."

Portland Democratic Socialists of America participated in the Occupy ICE protests at the federal immigration enforcement headquarters in Portland. The group seeks an "end to all ICE activities" in the city and any contracts between the city and federal immigration enforcement agents.

It called the halting of the training center contract with ICE "a small victory in a much larger battle."

The two groups plan a rally against ICE activities on Oct. 14.

"We will continue to fight against all ICE contracts in the city and the state, whether they be with private business or public government," a statement by the groups said.

## **Portland approves \$1 million repair contract for Going Street bridge smashed by train**

*By Andrew Thenen  
September 25, 2019*

Portland approved a \$1 million contract Wednesday to hire a private contractor to repair and stabilize the Going Street bridge, a vital connection to thousands of industrial jobs on Swan Island that was damaged when a train derailed and smashed into multiple support columns earlier this month.

The City Council unanimously approved the emergency deal with Cascade Bridge LLC, a Salmon Creek, Wash.-based company. The contract comes some 17 days after the Union Pacific railroad train derailed on a section of track underneath the bridge in the company's 200-acre Albina Yard in North Portland.

Since the incident, Portland has opened three travel lanes onto the island, half as many as are typically available. The bridge draws an average of 35,000 vehicles every day.

Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, who oversees the transportation bureau, said the city is concerned about the long-term effect the lane closures will have on businesses because major shippers UPS and FedEx have large operations on the island.

"This could actually be economically disastrous for businesses across the city," Eudaly said.

According to council documents, the city has "low-confidence" that the \$1 million contract will end up being the final cost.

Commissioners on Wednesday made clear they don't plan on footing the repair costs.

Dylan Rivera, a transportation spokesman, said the city's risk management office will "seek to recover from Union Pacific and any other responsible parties all reasonable and necessary costs associated with the damage to the City's transportation infrastructure" and those costs would include "other costs related to the incident and the resulting disruptions."

City engineers and contractors are still investigating the extent of the damage to the bridge, which is actually three different interconnected spans

The train struck the southern-most and center bridge, which were built in 1976 and 1930 respectively. Cameron Glasgow, the transportation bureau's supervising bridge engineer, said the city's seismic retrofit that stabilized the bridges and connected them in 2010 likely saved the structure from further damages but it also is making repairs more challenging.

Glasgow briefed the council on the latest damage assessment on Wednesday, showing slides indicating that cracks on the support columns were up to three-quarters of an inch wide in multiple places.

He said the railroad has thus far not been responsive in clearly articulating when the city will be allowed to work on site to fix the bridge, specifically more extensive repair work that would require the railroad to stop operations in the immediate area.

Mayor Ted Wheeler said he wants the railroad to know "they will work with" the city.

"I will use every option available to me," he said, to force the issue.

Tim McMahan, a Union Pacific spokesman responsible for communications across six Western and Southwestern states, said preliminary investigation indicates a "broken rail" caused the derailment.

Federal railroad officials will make a final determination of the cause sometime in the next 12 to 18 months, he said in an email.

The railroad has said in media reports after the incident that no one was injured in the crash, but it appears that was because no one was physically on-board the locomotive.

When asked directly on Wednesday, McMahan confirmed the locomotive that was pulling three tankers filled with liquified petroleum gas when it smashed into the bridge was being operated via remote control.

“Remote controlled locomotives are commonly used in switching operations throughout our system and have been for years,” he said via email.

McMahan did not answer questions about how far away the remote-control operator was from the locomotive or if having a conductor in the vehicle would have led to a different outcome.

The city is trying to open a fourth travel lane to the island, but no timetable is yet available.

Portland is also studying whether it’s possible to make one of the three open lanes reversible, so that on morning commutes it could help drivers get to the island but offer easier access off the job center in the evening for eastbound drivers.

## **The Portland Tribune**

### **Police chief honored by Scouts**

*By KOIN 6 News  
September 25, 2019*

**Danielle Outlaw was honored as a Woman of Distinction by the Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington.**

Portland Police Bureau Chief Danielle Outlaw has been honored as a Woman of Distinction by the Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington, KOIN 6 News reports.

Outlaw became the first African American woman to lead the police bureau when she was selected years ago.

In her speech Tuesday, Sept. 24, she spoke to young girls on the challenges of being a leader and persevering in a male-dominated industry. She also said she hopes to be a role model for girls who dream of working in similar positions.

Latino Network Director Carmen Rubio also was honored.

### **PBOT spending \$1.9 million on N. Denver Avenue upgrade**

*By Zane Sparling  
September 26, 2019*

**Portland Bureau of Transportation touts Fixing Our Streets road, pedestrian projects that tap 10-cent gas tax.**

The Portland Bureau of Transportation is touting several pedestrian and pothole projects that tapped Fixing Our Streets dollars from the city's 10-cent gas tax.

- On North Williams Avenue, crews are repaving the street, improving crosswalks and replacing nine curb ramps for the price of \$620,000. The construction and associated detours between Northeast Cook and Stanton streets should conclude by the end of the year.

- Smoother streets for motorists — plus more pedestrian amenities — are underway on North Denver Avenue between Lombard and Watts streets. The \$1.9 million project adds pedestrian refuge islands at North Russet, Terry and Watts streets, and will improve the bike lane and pre-existing pedestrian islands. PBOT hopes to finish the job by Nov. 1.

- Also paid for with the Fixing Our Streets fund, the transportation bureau recently announced that it completed 12 Safe Routes to School this summer — out of 88 that are funded. Speed bumps were installed at four locations, while less intrusive speed cushions were built in five spots. Median islands, extended curbs and pedestrian posts were constructed as well.

## **Eudaly delays City Council vote on neighborhood changes**

*By Jim Redden*

*September 25, 2019*

**Commissioner says she will present a report on the proposal intended to increase civic engagement on Nov. 14 instead of the final version.**

Commissioner Chloe Eudaly will delay presenting the controversial public engagement changes to the Portland City Council.

In a Wednesday, Sept. 25, email, Eudaly said she will present the council "a report" on the proposal on Nov. 14. The council had previously scheduled a possible vote on the proposal on that day.

The email was sent by the Office of Community and Civic Life, which is writing the proposal that many neighborhood activist say will undermine the city's longtime neighborhood association system. It said Eudaly indicated the change will allow the council more time to consider the facts and have a public conversation before taking a vote to change section 3.96 of the City Code, which governs to public engagement process.

"In making this announcement, I want to be very clear that I intend to see these policy changes through to completion in a timely manner," the email quoted Eudaly as saying. "The changes proposed by Committee 3.96 reflect a transformative vision for the City's approach to civic engagement and deserve fair consideration. We can no longer claim to believe in equity but refuse to update the code accordingly. However, heartfelt questions and concerns have been raised about what the new system may look like and how it will work — and I want to be able to answer them before advancing these changes."

The proposal is intended to increase public participation in civic issues, especially among people in marginalized communities that do not identify with geographic boundaries. But Eudaly has reportedly not been able to convinced a majority of the council to support it and, in a Sept. 10 email, threatened Commissioner Amanda Fritz directly and the other members indirectly if they did not support her plan.

This week's email did not say when Eudaly will ask the council to vote on the proposal. She is up for reelection in 2020 and is being challenged by several candidates, including Mingus Mapps, a former office employee who opposes the current version of the proposal.

## Willamette Week

# City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly Moves to Delay Changes to Portland's Neighborhood Associations

*By Rachel Monahan  
September 25, 2019*

**Council was scheduled to consider changes to neighborhood associations Nov. 14. Now, they'll just get a report.**

In the face of vocal opposition from neighborhood associations—and a lack of support from her fellow city commissioners—Commissioner Chloe Eudaly has announced she's delaying a scheduled vote on changing how Portland City Hall recognizes neighborhood associations. (The vote was scheduled for Nov. 14.)

“In order to conduct the level of engagement required, and in light of the fact that I will be out of the country for the next two weeks, I have decided to present the proposed code changes as a report on November 14th,” writes Eudaly in a Sept. 24 Facebook post. “This will allow Council more time to consider the facts and have a public conversation before taking a vote on a final package.”

(Why is she out of the country? Eudaly, who is the city's transportation commissioner, will be participating in a congestion pricing study tour in Europe, put together and paid for by Bloomberg American Cities Climate Challenge, her office says.)

Eudaly said in her post she's not backing off the proposal but giving herself more time to engage with the community on the criticisms that have been raised.

"In making this announcement, I want to be very clear that I intend to see these policy changes through to completion in a timely manner," she wrote. "The changes proposed by Committee 3.96 reflect a transformative vision for the City's approach to civic engagement and deserve fair consideration. We can no longer claim to believe in equity but refuse to update the code accordingly."

## Retailers Weigh Challenging the Portland Clean Energy Fund in Court

*By Rachel Monahan  
September 25, 2019*

**But that would be a customer-relations nightmare. So far, the prospect of a lawsuit is just leverage.**

The Aug. 6 memo from the Washington, D.C., law firm McDermott Will & Emery says businesses could challenge the 1 percent increase in the city's business license tax for companies that have a half-million dollars in sales in Portland and a billion nationally. The revenues are earmarked to fund green energy projects in minority and low-income communities.

The memo was paid for by the National Retail Federation, according to a source with knowledge of its funding. No such lawsuit has yet been filed, and suing could present a customer relations

problem for any retailer who challenges popular support for the fund. (The measure won the approval of 65 percent of voters last November, after all.)

But the legal case shows pressure growing in the ongoing debate about who should be required to pay the tax. After the election, the tax proved to be more expansive than its backers told voters. And several businesses now subject to the tax—such as construction contractors, insurance firms and even the city's garbage haulers—might be less sensitive to popular opinion and freer to pursue legal action.

The memo says businesses could challenge the Portland Clean Energy Fund in federal or state court. On what grounds? The commerce clause of the U.S. Constitution, which limits states' authority to regulate business conducted across state lines.

The lawyers argue the Clean Energy Fund might violate that clause: "Its practical effect would result in differential treatment between local entities and out-of-state entities that have comparable revenue from business conducted in Portland, but where the out-of-state entity generates substantial revenue in interstate commerce."

The Portland Business Alliance, a key opponent of the Clean Energy Fund measure, says it's staying out of any legal action—in part because it's still negotiating with City Hall for exemptions from the tax. But the memo does provide the PBA with valuable leverage.

"This legal view has been a topic of discussion, but frankly not where the business community wants to go right now," says Andrew Hoan, president and CEO of the alliance. "We still feel confident that working with advocates, City Council and the mayor, we can find agreement on a retail tax that implements what the voters understood they were endorsing last fall."

The coalition that successfully campaigned for the measure last November rejected any suggestion that a possible lawsuit should sway whether the city should exempt some businesses.

"We're focused on making sound public policy by implementing [the fund] as passed by the voters," says Jenny Lee, advocacy director at the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon and a spokeswoman for the coalition.

## **Portland's Carbon Emissions From Planes, Trains and Automobiles Are Rising**

*By Rachel Monahan*

*September 25, 2019*

**"The city's climate report seems to be in denial."**

That's the increase in carbon emissions from transportation—planes, trains and automobiles—in Multnomah County since 1990.

Last week, the city of Portland released its latest round of data on carbon emissions in advance of a Sept. 20 climate strike led by students. Portland has reason to be proud of its history; the city set carbon targets before many of the protesters on the streets last week were born. City officials emphasized their long-term success: Between 1990 and 2017, overall carbon emissions from all sources declined 15 percent.

But there is no sugarcoating what's happened in the subset of transportation emissions over that same timespan: They rose 8 percent. "The city's climate report seems to be in denial about the causes and the seriousness of the rise in transportation emissions," economist Joe Cortright wrote

on his City Observatory blog. "The report fails to mention that all of the increase in transportation emissions came after 2014—when gas prices fell by more than a third, prompting more driving."

Recently, the city's progress has slowed. In 2017, overall emissions climbed slightly.

City officials say there's been an increase in population, not in driving per person.

## **Mayor Ted Wheeler Takes First Formal Step to Reelection, Hires Campaign Manager**

*By Rachel Monahan*

*September 24, 2019*

**Wheeler has repeatedly said he wanted to break Portland's cycle of one-term mayors. Now he's taken the first concrete action toward doing so.**

Mayor Ted Wheeler began saying he would run for reelection last fall after he publicly muttered in public about hating the job.

It was a moment of frustration, he said, and he would attempt to break Portland's streak of one-term mayor's regardless:

"I'm not going to make an announcement today, because my wife and my daughter have a right to be engaged in the decision when I make it, and I'll make it during 2019," Wheeler told WW in December. "But people should absolutely expect I will not only run for re-election, but I will run an aggressive campaign, and I will put a very aggressive, forward-looking agenda on the table."

He all but formalized the decision in a May 7 interview with the Portland Tribune.

"I am not going to officially announce until after Labor Day," he told the Tribune editorial board. "It's a little early for that right now. But you know, I don't want to walk away from this job right now. I have great confidence in what I'm doing. And how I'm doing it and what my administration has prioritized. I've worked really hard. It's, it hasn't always been fun, but it has been very, very meaningful and I want to see this work through, I believe in it."

It's after Labor Day; he still hasn't made an announcement. But now he has taken the first concrete step to reelection: hiring a campaign manager.

Jennifer Arguinzoni worked in the mayor's office till earlier this month as director of Strategic Partnerships, and before that on the mayor's 2016 campaign.

She started working on Wheeler's re-election campaign on Sept. 16.



# Student Climate Activists Don't Want the Portland Mayor to Fly to Copenhagen

*By Rachel Monahan and Ryan Nguyen  
September 25, 2019*

## **What climate-striking teens want to tell the mayor.**

The tens of thousands of students who marched on Portland's streets Sept. 20 to demand policy action on climate change want those reforms to start with Mayor Ted Wheeler.

They are demanding he stay home from a climate change meeting in Copenhagen next month unless he first blocks the expansion of a Zenith oil terminal, funds free TriMet passes for schoolkids, and declares a climate emergency.

WW has learned Wheeler tried to meet the last of these demands, shopping a climate emergency resolution around City Hall before the protest. But he couldn't cut a deal—in part because student activists told city commissioners his resolution wasn't substantive enough.

Tensions between student activists and City Hall may increase after Portland police officers roughly arrested two teenage protesters during the climate march (see more at [wweek.com](http://wweek.com)).

The mayor's office says it's working to address the students' demands.

"In response to the city's initial engagement efforts and proposed timeline, the mayor and several commissioners' offices heard the need for a more robust stakeholder process," says mayoral spokesman Timothy Becker.

WW spoke to three student leaders of the strike and asked what they would tell Wheeler.

### **Ella Shriner, 17**

"I think it's a tendency for people in power to say, 'I stand with you.' Our message would be, 'We need you to not just stand. We need you to take leaps and to act with us.' It's more important to be staying here and taking that action than going [to Copenhagen] and falsely representing what we've done here."

### **Jaden Winn, 16**

"Look, we, the citizens of Portland—your constituents—do not want or permit you to go to this event as a leader unless you take a leadership role in your own city."

### **Lana Perice, 16**

"He's kind of claiming this responsibility for climate justice, but we hadn't seen any real work with frontline communities. So we demanded better of him. We demanded more. Leading a city like Portland, you have the obligation to recognize not only the colonization that has contributed to climate change, [but also] how youth have fought. And to take away from that is wrong, right?"

## The Portland Mercury

# Portland Activists Won't Let City Council Forget About Zenith

*By Blair Stenvick  
September 26, 2019*

For Maria Landin, the decision to protest a crude oil train terminal in Northwest Portland is a simple one.

“If we do nothing, then it’s like we’re agreeing,” said Landin, who is a program assistant with Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility. “So for me personally, it’s about being able to say again and again, ‘We’re not okay with this in our community.’”

Landin is part of a group of Portlanders who are holding a 60-hour vigil this week outside of a terminal owned by Zenith Energy. Zenith has been the subject of local outrage since February, when OPB reported that the Houston-based company was significantly expanding its Portland facilities, and had quietly began importing crude oil sands last year. Oil sands are among the most toxic and environmentally harmful means of extracting oil.

Some in Portland were surprised by the news of Zenith’s expansion, given that Portland City Council passed a ban on new oil infrastructure development in 2016. But because Zenith had obtained a permit for its expansion work before that ban passed—and because that ban was challenged in court by the oil industry—Zenith was allowed to proceed.

At a July public forum, Portlanders packed into an auditorium at the University of Portland to express their concerns about the Zenith terminal, and urge Portland City Council to do whatever it could to oppose the energy company’s trains and facility expansion. They argued that running crude oil trains through Portland on a regular basis could result in a massively harmful oil spill, and that tacitly allowing Portland to serve the oil industry’s needs went against the city’s environmental values.

At the forum, Mayor Ted Wheeler and other city commissioners said that although they are philosophically opposed to Zenith’s presence and continued expansion in Portland, they weren’t sure how much power they have to bring Zenith’s actions to a halt.

The city has continued to issue construction permits to Zenith to continue the work that was originally approved prior to the 2016 oil infrastructure ban.

“Decisions on permit applications are made according to the regulations that are in effect when the application is submitted,” said BDS official Terry Whitehill in a July press release. “The city cannot change the goalposts now and apply new, different requirements after the applicant has already submitted their permit application and been approved for construction.”

At a September 18 City Council meeting, environmental activists presented a petition demanding the city stop issuing permits to Zenith. It had over 6,000 signatures.

“We need to do something bold, but we also have to do things that are legal,” Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty told the activists at that meeting. “I just want you to know that we are looking into every opportunity that we have to make Oregon the most unattractive place for companies like Zenith to operate in. ... Just know we’re on it, even though you’re not hearing or seeing it. Know that we are working on this.”

In the meantime, a small group of Portlanders is taking matters into its own hands by holding a vigil outside the Zenith property this week. The vigil, which started Tuesday morning and will end at Thursday evening, is the collaboration of a number of different environmental groups, including 350 PDX, the Sierra Club, Extinction Rebellion, and others.

Landin said protesting Zenith is a personal issue for her, both as an indigenous woman and a resident of the Cully neighborhood, which Zenith trains run through.

“I pass some of these trains sometimes, and I can’t even see the end of it, they’re so long,” she said. “It’s really frightening to think of different schools I know on the train line, different businesses and communities that will be impacted [in the event of an oil spill].”

Seeing thousands of people turn out for last Friday’s climate strike, Landin said, is “definitely bringing me hope.”

“For me personally as an indigenous woman, it’s really about returning to our roots and respecting the earth and all that she has to offer,” she added.

The vigil participants are doing more than just protesting Zenith—they’re also keeping watch over the terminal. Volunteers are using a powerful telescope to keep track of how many trains enter the terminal throughout the 60-hour vigil, and how many of those trains bear the number 1267—an indication that they are carrying crude oil. Zenith hasn’t been forthcoming in its dealing with the city so far, so the vigil “trainspotters” want to compile their own data.

“We’re trying to take pictures and document times and numbers of cars, and how frequently,” said Landin, “because there’s dangerous things coming through our neighborhood and there’s reason to believe Zenith hasn’t been transparent about how much.”

Tara Ohta, one of the trainspotters, told the Mercury that she saw 12 crude oil trains come through the terminal on Tuesday morning alone. Nicholas Caleb, a staff attorney with the Center for Sustainable Economy, said the data trainspotters collect could help first responders be more prepared to respond to an oil spill.

As activists keep watch over Zenith, city commissioners are exploring their options. The 2016 oil infrastructure ban survived a legal challenge, but last year the Oregon Court of Appeals directed the city to make tweaks to the ordinance before it goes back into effect. City Council is expected to make those changes before the end of 2019.

There are actions the city could take to limit Zenith’s activity in Portland. An internal city memo obtained by the Oregonian last month revealed that Wheeler is considering several new restrictions on fossil fuel infrastructure, including requiring companies like Zenith to conform to stricter earthquake safety standards, and formally opposing any new Department of Environmental Quality permits for Zenith.

Portland City Council also plans to declare a climate emergency soon. Portland city code grants special powers to the mayor when an emergency is declared, but it’s not clear if any of those powers could be applied to the Zenith situation.

Caleb said he and other environmental advocates would like to see a concrete goal included in the emergency declaration.

“We want our policymakers to actually say that they have a goal of having no fossil fuel infrastructure there at some point in the future, so we can have a plan for the managed decline of that industry in Portland,” he said.

As OPB reported earlier this month, Zenith is now planning to place two pipes below its NW Front facility, which will be used to transport methylene diphenyl diisocyanate, or MDI, a chemical that can cause asthma and lung damage. Zenith will need an additional permit to add these pipes, and Caleb said it's an opportunity for the city to directly resist the company. Portland city code includes a "good faith assessment" when considering permit approvals and continuations—and because Zenith has arguably not acted in good faith when dealing with the city, Caleb said, there might be a case for denying the permit.

"Zenith has not been a good faith actor," Caleb said. "They misrepresented their projects several times in a way that the city should look at their claims suspiciously."

Whether the city will go so far as to deny Zenith a permit—and whether such action would survive a legal challenge—is yet to be seen. But if the city isn't prepared to take more drastic action against Zenith, Landin said that local environmental activists and lawyers will be more than happy to do it themselves.

"People in the community are looking at any kind of course of action," Landin said. "[This vigil has] taken a lot of hours of planning and community involvement, and I think that speaks to how people feel about this."

## **OPB**

# **Portland Leaders Oppose White House Proposal On Police Moving Homeless People**

*By Amelia Templeton  
September 25, 2019*

Recent comments President Donald Trump made about homelessness "destroying" West Coast cities are worrying some officials and experts in Portland.

The President repeatedly brought up homelessness on a campaign fundraising trip in California and blamed cities there for not solving the problem.

Some California politicians have suggested the president made his comments primarily to score political points against the leaders of a democratic state home to some of his fiercest critics.

In Portland, local officials worry that the comments signal a new focus on homelessness from the White House — and a push for a more punitive approach to people living on the street from the federal government.

A recent report on homelessness from the White House Council on Economic Advisors singled out Oregon and Washington, among others, as states with larger homeless populations than can be explained by factors like housing costs or weather.

The report argues that less rigorous enforcement of laws against loitering might contribute to homelessness, by making it more tolerable to sleep on the street. It suggests using police to move homeless people off the street and into shelter.

"... when paired with effective services, policing may be an important tool to help move people off the street and into shelter or housing where they can get the services they need, as well as to ensure the health and safety of homeless and non-homeless people alike," the report concluded.

Portland officials and social service organizations held a press conference Wednesday to lay out their opposition to that approach.

“What they are considering isn’t a solution for homelessness, it’s yet another attempt to dehumanize people so they can be made invisible by shipping them out of sight,” said Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury.

The WHCEA report cites work by sociologist Peter Rossi from 1989 and economist Brendan O’Flaherty from 1996.

But it doesn’t provide any recent or more specific evidence to support its claim that states like Washington and Oregon have more people living on the street because of less stringent policing.

An analysis by Portland’s auditor reached a different conclusion about the extent of police contact with homeless people in the city.

Following up on reporting by The Oregonian, the auditor found that approximately half of the total number of people arrested by the Portland Police in 2017-2018 were homeless, and that many appeared to be picked up for offenses that would not have been crimes if they had happened indoors, like drinking alcohol.

Kafoury and other local leaders blame high rates of homelessness on cuts to federal housing aid that started in the 1980s, and argue the White House is stigmatizing poor people for “federal failures.”

“It’s been up to local folks to be there for people who have no other choice than to live on the streets,” Kafoury said.

Portland’s leaders and the White House advisors’ report do agree on one key point.

Both say one of the most effective ways to reduce homelessness is with programs that prevent it, intervening before a person is evicted or loses their home.