

PBOT

PORTLAND BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION

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Dan Saltzman Commissioner **Leah Treat** Director

April 12, 2017

Representative Caddy McKeown, Chair
House Transportation Policy Committee
900 Court Street NE, HR D
Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB 2682

Dear Chair McKeown and Members of the House Committee on Transportation Policy:

The City of Portland strongly supports HB 2682 with the -2 amendment, allowing the City of Portland to lower speeds on residential streets.

Last year, 44 people died on Portland's streets—the highest number in a decade. Safe streets are a top priority for Portland policy-makers and residents. The City of Portland adopted a Vision Zero Action Plan with a goal of eliminating all traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2025 and is moving quickly to implement the Plan.

As part of Vision Zero, the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) is working to establish safe speed limits across Portland. Speed is a critical factor in making streets safer because crashes that occur at slower speeds are less likely to result in deaths and serious injuries. This is true even at relatively low speeds; a person who drives at 20 miles per hour instead of 25 and crashes into a pedestrian is 42 percent less likely to kill that person.

While speed limits do not guarantee compliance, they establish a clear expectation for people using streets, and help PBOT to pursue design, education, and enforcement strategies that align posted speeds with travel behavior. The City of Portland will continue to design its streets, especially local streets, in a manner that encourages safe and slower driving.

Under current state law, PBOT must ask ODOT for permission to change speed limits. PBOT frequently makes these requests, which can be time and resource intensive for both ODOT and PBOT. Granting the City of Portland the authority to set speed limits on residential streets would have multiple benefits. It would improve the safety of our local system, support the Safe



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Routes to School program by lowering speeds near all schools, and eliminate current inconsistency on residential streets between school zones and non-school zones.

Approximately 60%, or 2,980 lane miles, of Portland's streets are residential streets. The -2 amendment of HB 2682 would allow the City of Portland to lower speeds to 20 miles per hour on these residential streets, streets that are critical in connecting community members to schools and neighborhood centers, where the most vulnerable populations, the young and the elderly, are walking and gathering.

Sincerely,



Leah Treat



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