

Health Department

March 6, 2019

Joint Committee on Transportation
900 Court St. NE - HR F
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: HB 2702 - Relating to highway speeds

Co-Chairs Beyer, McKeown, Co-Vice Chairs Boquist, Noble, and members of the Committee, my name is Jeston Black and I am the Director of Government Relations for Multnomah County. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 2702.

Unintentional injuries are a leading cause of death in Multnomah County.¹ Mindful of the preventable nature of traffic crash injuries, Multnomah County Health Department has joined with the City of Portland in their Vision Zero effort to eliminate fatal and serious traffic crash injuries. Like other public health agencies engaged on this effort across the country and around the world, we recognize lowering speed as one of the most effective steps to reduce the likelihood and severity of injuries. The World Health Organization recommends that urban streets should have speed limits of no more than 30 mph, estimating that a 5% reduction in average speed can reduce fatalities by 30%.²

Local control of speeds improves the ability of jurisdictions to manage speeds in ways that are both responsive to local conditions and consistent across a jurisdiction. It is in recognition of this dynamic that the World Health Organization established local control of speed limits as a best practice. Doing so enables local authorities to quickly adjust speeds in areas with a high concentration of vulnerable road users, such as near schools, transit centers, and busy shopping districts. As the local public health authority Multnomah County Health Department's interest is in reducing serious and fatal traffic crash injuries in all jurisdictions in the County, and we therefore support an

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Underlying Cause of Death 1999-2017 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released December, 2018. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Files, 1999-2017

² Global status report on road safety 2018. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2018. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. Available from:
https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2018/en/

evidence-based approach to managing speed effectively and efficiently throughout the state. We urge the committee to adopt an approach that allows the state to delegate speed authority to local jurisdictions.

Thank you,

Jeston Black

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