



April 16, 2019

To: Joint Committee on Transportation

From: Adelante Mujeres

RE: House Bill 2015: Equal Access to Roads Act

Co-Chair Senator Lee Beyer, Co-Chair Representative Caddy McKeown, and Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation.

Adelante Mujeres is a nonprofit organization based in Forest Grove, OR that empowers Latina women and their families through education and entrepreneurial programs to ensure their full participation and active leadership in the community. We will continue to support immigrant women and their whole families through our holistic programs grounded in solidarity until we have a community where all families thrive and live a life with dignity and respect. For that reason, we urge you to support HB 2015.

HB 2015 would expand eligibility for a standard (Class C) driver license to all Oregon residents regardless of citizenship status. Oregon residents who pass a written and driving tests, pay the fee, and provide proof of identity and residency can receive a standard driver license. Currently, 80,000-100,000 Oregon residents could benefit from driver's license expansion.

Oregon residents have been living in constant fear for almost a decade when taking their kids to school, going to work or taking care of a family member. In 2018, Adelante Mujeres and the Immigrant Solidarity Collaborative conducted 7 focus groups in Washington County to identify the top needs and priorities among Spanish speaking immigrants. The number one priority identified was the need for driver license. This issue needs to be address not just at the County but at the State level. For this reason, we strongly support HB 2015.

This is the time when we must embrace our Oregon values of justice and fairness. It is not acceptable for immigrants without a driver's license with no criminal record to be flagged for deportation over a traffic stop. One of the most heartbreaking stories we have heard include mothers who have children with disabilities and who are limited to drive their children to crucial medical appointments.

In many rural communities like Forest Grove and Cornelius, it is not practical and safe for families to walk for miles on roads with no sidewalks to get to the nearest bus stop or just to get to work. Oregon is home to thousands of immigrants who need access to a driver's license, a core everyday need, to continue contributing to the cultural and economic vitality of the state. Therefore, Adelante Mujeres supports HB 2015 and encourages this committee to pass it. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Bridget Cooke
Executive Director
Adelante Mujeres