

To: Co-Chairs Rep. Lee Beyer & Sen. Caddy McKeown  
& other Joint Committee on Transportation members.

5/13/2019.



**My name is Michael Sonnleitner.** I currently serve on the Board of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue of Roses Business Association, on the Advisory Council of the PCC Small Business Development Center, and as an elected Trustee for Portland Community College (representing over 120,700 voters in Zone 3 – which includes the PCC Southeast Campus, now enrolling the most diverse student population in the state of Oregon). I also now serve as Co-Chair of the PCC Board Committee on Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion and am actively involved in the Oregon Community Colleges Association (OCCA) which represents Oregon's 17 Community College Districts in advocating for common concerns.

**For over 16 years my family has resided at 1037 SE 80<sup>th</sup> Ave. in Portland** – a location which requires daily experience with 82<sup>nd</sup> Ave (State Highway 213) compelled me to become active with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Improvement Coalition.

**I strongly urge your support for HB 2846, the Safe Community Highways Act.**

**For over 5 years** I have personally witnessed the challenges involved in attempts to have ODOT and PBOT (either separately or together) address the many problems associated with the 7.3 miles of State Highway 213 which has de-facto become a central city street. Much has changed since 1930 when this highway served farmlands as the eastern boundary for a growing city. Now 82<sup>nd</sup> Ave. equally divides East Portland on a N-S axis and has become a glaring example of how political neglect & over 30 years of severely deferred maintenance discourages economic development, family-friendly neighborhoods, and public safety improvements. Over time it has gained a reputation as a dysfunctional eyesore that is unsafe for cars & pedestrians alike – a literal crash corridor where traffic fatalities are among the most frequent in Oregon.

While ODOT & PBOT are (as a result of years of community organizing and public pressure) currently communicating, there is little assurance that flowery sentiments will blossom into adequate action in the near future. It has become clear that Jurisdictional Transfer is crucial to building an infrastructure needed by impacted communities. HB 2846 can both reinforce the need for timely agreements to be reached regarding 82<sup>nd</sup> Ave. – and (more importantly) facilitate conversations in other locations throughout Oregon that now face similar challenges (or will do so in the foreseeable future). HB 2846 can help provide a framework for addressing issues of Jurisdictional Transfer as they arise in municipalities like The Dalles, Bend, Klamath Falls, Roseburg, and La Grande – where the needs of community colleges, K-12 public schools, businesses, and safer neighborhoods can and should be better satisfied.

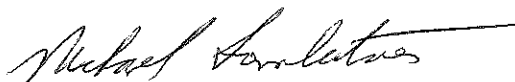
Together, let us affirm how:

- An integral part of a thriving community is safe, accessible streets and sidewalks.
- Existing state highways that act like city streets or county roads are not being prioritized for maintenance and are neglected.
- The impact to the towns and cities that rely on these under-maintained highways includes a significant public health risk, with increases in traffic accidents and fatalities.
- These community highways are critical to the success of our communities; serving as the main road for business districts throughout Oregon, allowing transport of local goods, and connecting cities, towns, and people together.
- Passing Safe Community Highways for All Oregonians will allow communities throughout Oregon to assume control of candidate highways through jurisdictional transfer.
- This legislation addresses the problem of individual communities legislating for jurisdictional transfer on their own.
- This Act allows all communities in Oregon with candidate highways to work together to develop strategies for jurisdictional transfer.
- Through passage of this Act, local communities can correctly prioritize the safety and maintenance needs of these important roadways.
- We need to allow communities to decide how these neglected and dangerous community highways are maintained and designed.

HB 2846 should easily be seen as remarkably non-partisan – and beneficial to a wide range of municipalities throughout Oregon. It is NOT merely about the fact that a person walking a bicycle in a crosswalk was killed near the PCC Southeast Campus, or that wide cracks in the street caused a friend of mine to crash his bicycle, or that a person (like my wife who does not have a bicycle) cannot even walk with her prosthesis because there are areas where paved sidewalks do not exist. It IS because HB 2846 could help citizens throughout the state more pro-actively address the many problems posed by realities such as these within their own local communities.

Your consideration of my testimony on this bill is appreciated. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



**Michael Sonleitner, 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue of Roses Business Association,**  
Community Activist with many other affiliations, &  
Elected Portland Community College Trustee (Zone3).

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**82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue**  
of Roses Business Association

Dear HB 2846 Co-Sponsors,

March 27, 2019

We need your support for Safe Community Highways for all Oregonians (House Bill 2846).

The State of Oregon has a vast collection of Highways. These highways are viewed as a system, each separate Highway serving as a connector to another Highway. The intent of this system of Highways is to move freight and commerce throughout the State of Oregon.

As markets and traffic capacity change, new Highways are added, and freight routing is changed. As a result, some existing Highways no longer serve a statewide function. These existing Highways are not prioritized for maintenance and are neglected.

The impact to the towns and cities that rely on these under-maintained Highways is significant. Many of these Highways look and act like city streets or county roads.

These important community Highways are critical to the success of our communities; serving as the main business district in towns throughout Oregon, allowing transport of local goods to market, and connecting city and towns together.

Safe and well-maintained roads is one of our most important public assets. Poorly maintained roads put the lives of Oregonians at risk.

We need to make community Highways safe to travel on.

Passing Safe Community Highways for all Oregonians will allow communities throughout Oregon to assume control of candidate Highways through jurisdictional transfer, a complex process which requires an Act of legislation to be passed.

This legislation solves the problem of individual communities legislating for jurisdictional transfer on their own. This Act allows all communities in Oregon with candidate Highways to work together to develop strategies for jurisdictional transfer.

Through passage of this Act, local communities can correctly prioritize the safety and maintenance needs of these important roadways.

We need to allow communities to decide how these neglected and dangerous community Highways are maintained and designed.

We need to pass Safe Community Highways for all Oregonians.

We thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Gary Sargent  
President, 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue of Roses Business Association

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