



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Testimony in Support for HB 2744-1

March 25, 2021

Co-Chairs McLain and Beyer, Co-Vice Chairs Boquist and Noble, and members of the committee,

My name is Khanh Pham, Representative for House District 46. I am honored to testify as chief sponsor for HB 2744 with the -1 amendment.

Jurisdictional Transfer is when ownership of a roadway is transferred from the State to a local roadway authority. The goal of Jurisdictional Transfer is to ensure that Oregon roads are owned and operated by the right local agency to better serve the public and the needs of each region.

As a community organizer, I have spent the last 5 years working on this issue. In my neighborhood in the Jade District in SE Portland, I live two blocks away from 82nd avenue, one of the deadliest and under-maintained streets in Portland. An elementary school and large high school are located right on the highway, and I hear from my constituents about their fears that the next news headline of a pedestrian death will feature their loved one. These urban arterials **should be connecting forces for a neighborhood, not something that structurally divides and shepherds death.**

Traffic and pedestrian deaths are preventable, but we need to be able to transfer these so-called 'orphan highways' to the local jurisdictions that can maintain and upgrade the roads in alignment with safety and community needs. Without these transfers, residents and local businesses suffer the impacts--from more accidents and pedestrian deaths to increased car repair costs from potholes, and lack of access to businesses. We as a legislature can do something about this.

HB 2744-1 is an important step towards progress. The bill simply does two things. **First**, It establishes the **Oregon Highway Jurisdictional Transfer Fund** for the purpose of paying costs to upgrade and transfer jurisdiction of highways. **Second**, it directs ODOT to require each of the five state regions described by ODOT to conduct jurisdictional transfer evaluations and present a report to this committee no later than September 15, 2022. **Our -1 amendment** recognizes that some regions, like the Portland Metro area Region 1, have already conducted these studies and have robust implementation plans that should be implemented as soon as sufficient funding is appropriated.

Jurisdictional Transfer is **a public good that we agree on** -- stakeholders from ODOT and many local transportation authorities are supportive of jurisdictional transfer. There is a strong connection between dangerous roadway safety, neglect of maintaining roads, and communities of color disproportionately being pushed out to live alongside these roadways. There are **new**



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local jobs and investment to be had in the area of infrastructure. Small and local businesses suffer when their neighborhood roads are unsafe and unmaintained for pedestrians, and these roads are harder to travel in poor weather if it's already in a state of bad repair. **Jurisdictional transfer can be a part of our economic recovery.**

This committee has taken incredible action in the past on Jurisdictional Transfer. Many transfer opportunities have been previously studied and planned for; many roadways have been successfully transferred across the state. In 2017, Legislators answered the call and funded the transfer of one of Portland's most used, undermaintained, and dangerous roadways that also runs through my district, Powell Boulevard. However, **the job continues and this session we can do so again** for the Oregonians who so desperately need these roads to change for their families, for their children, for their neighborhood to survive.

We know that funding is the central barrier to moving forward. This bill does not create a funding mechanism but it does put us in a much better position for when we succeed at solving this important puzzle by having a designated account and making sure that regions of Oregon are prepared to reap the benefits of jurisdictional transfer when the funding is available.

Cities should have control over major roads that connect their communities. **As a mother and a legislator, I view it as my responsibility to protect families and make Oregon a safer place to live, to thrive.** I urge your support HB 2744 with the -1 amendment. Thank you.