

PBOT

PORTLAND BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION

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Mingus Mapps Commissioner **Tara Wasiak** Interim Director

April 27, 2023

Senator Lew Frederick, Co-Chair
Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Transportation
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain and Members of the Committee:

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on HB 3556 and the –2 amendment. The City of Portland is very concerned with the impacts of abandoned recreational vehicles (RVs) on our public rights of way. Part of PBOT’s work to support a safe and livable city involves removing derelict recreational vehicles, remediating biohazards, and demolishing them. The current process used to demolish these unsafe RVs was launched in the fall of 2016. Since then, the number of derelict RVs has risen. We appreciate that this bill creates an Abandoned Recreational Vehicle Account at the state level to help defray the cost burden on jurisdictions across the state. We also appreciate that the bill standardizes a more fair and reasonable notice and retrieval process. However, we share the concerns expressed during the hearing about the bill as it is currently written.

We are concerned that this bill could affect Portland’s ability to continue our current practices around towing and destroying recreational vehicles. First, we need to ensure that this bill will not affect our ability to tow RVs that are not abandoned, as is done in specific circumstances through the joint Street Services Coordination Center. Second, we are concerned that the definition of “abandoned vehicles” does not align with our experience of the state in which these vehicles are sometimes abandoned on City right-of-way. In many cases, the vehicles are abandoned but still contain objects, such as sleeping bags, that could be considered “evidence that an individual is using the recreational vehicle as shelter.” This is not always the case, as these items are often handed out free of charge and frequently left behind or discarded. We request that the definition be revisited to clarify what constitutes an abandoned RV.

We are also concerned about the introduction of the term “right to possession” in Sections 6 and 7. Depending on how this term is defined, it could make the process of proving ownership of the RV or of the possessions inside more ambiguous and challenging. Many of the RVs that



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staff encounter are not registered to the person possessing the vehicle. In almost all cases, the individual possessing the vehicle cannot produce a bill of sale or other transfer of ownership documents. This puts towers and agencies at risk of releasing a vehicle to the wrong person.

Lastly, we would like to see clarification of how much reimbursement is considered "reasonable." This bill allows the department to set maximum reimbursement rates, but we would appreciate more clarity on how the maximum will be set.

There are other minor clarifications that we believe would be helpful, and PBOT would welcome the opportunity to participate in the refinement of the amendment. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tara Wasiak". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a distinct loop at the end.

Tara Wasiak, Interim Director
Portland Bureau of Transportation