



Public Works

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February 10, 2025
Joint Committee On Transportation
900 Court St. NE,
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Benton County Urges Support for Rural Traffic Safety, House Bill 2154, with the -1 Amendments, Makes Permanent the County Safety Corridor Program

Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain, Co-Vice-Chairs Starr and Boshart Davis, Members of the Joint Committee On Transportation,

Benton County roads are a critical component of Oregon's integrated transportation system. The County is responsible for over 437 total miles, over 100 bridges, and countless street signs, culverts, guardrails, and other safety features.

County road departments play a key role in managing Oregon's rural traffic safety and the number one priority is ensuring Oregonians can get to where they are going safely on our roads. Rural county roadways face significant safety challenges from limited cell phone reception, longer emergency response times, simpler roadway infrastructure, and risky driver behaviors. While small-scale crashes are concentrated in urban areas, when vehicle crashes occur on rural county roads, the risk of fatalities is significantly higher than on urban roadways. Benton County suffered 64 fatal and serious injury crashes on county roads in 2022 alone.

House Bill 3213 (2019) directed the Oregon Department of Transportation, through a County Safety Corridor Advisory Group, to establish a Safety Corridor Pilot Program to develop the processes for and evaluate the effectiveness of allowing counties to designate safety corridors with doubled traffic fines. The Pilot Program demonstrated that doubled traffic fines, in conjunction with road signs, outreach, and enforcement, led to short-term successes on two stretches of county roadway that had a high incidence of fatal and serious injury crashes.

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**At your service,
*every day.***

Joint Committee On Transportation
RE: Support for Rural Traffic Safety, HB 2154
February 10, 2025

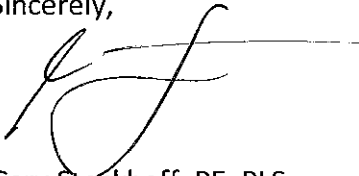
Page 2

Benton County is currently developing a Transportation Safety Action Plan that will identify High Injury Networks that might benefit from a County Safety Corridor designation. This bill would allow Benton County to implement a program to increase safety in these corridors.

County safety corridor programs currently do not receive dedicated funding support, counties must divert limited road and enforcement revenue to the most dangerous priority corridors. However, county safety corridor designations have allowed counties to successfully apply for competitive state and federal safety grants. Benton County appreciates the ongoing engagement with this committee and the legislature as we work together to ensure the growth and sustainability of the State Highway Fund to support the operations, maintenance, preservation, and safety of our seamless transportation system into the future.

Without action this session, the County Safety Corridor Pilot Program will be repealed on January 2, 2026. This lifesaving practical tool is ready to move from a pilot program to a permanent tool for all counties. Oregon Counties urge your support to pass HB 2154, with the -1 amendments, to establish a permanent County Safety Corridor Program. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Gary Stockhoff, PE, PLS
Public Works Director



Laurel Byer, PE
County Engineer