



February 11, 2025

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

RE: Counties Urge 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,

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. County roads suffered 719 fatal and serious injury crashes in 2022. While small-scale crashes are concentrated in urban areas, rural county roads see 74% of county road fatalities, and when vehicle crashes occur there, the risk of fatalities is significantly higher than on urban roadways.

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.

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 apply for competitive state and federal safety grants successfully. The Association of Oregon Counties and the Oregon Association of County Engineers and Surveyors appreciate 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.

If action is not taken this session, the County Safety Corridor Pilot Program will be repealed on January 2, 2026. This lifesaving practical tool is ready to become permanent for all counties. Oregon Counties urges your support for HB 2154, with the -1 amendments, to establish a permanent County Safety Corridor Program.

Sincerely,

Brian Worley
County Road Program Director, Association of Oregon Counties
Oregon Association of County Engineers and Surveyors

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