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On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB458

Testimony for Senate Bill 458

As a resident living on Highway 30 in rural Clasp County for the past eight years, I have witnessed numerous car and bicycle accidents, resulting in major injuries and deaths. Within two weeks of moving here, a fatal accident occurred nearby. Ambulances and LifeFlight have transported victims right in front of our house. I personally saw a bicyclist hit on the shoulder of the highway.

The left turn into our home is immediately after a narrow bridge with zero shoulder, which requires careful preparation to avoid accidents, especially with tailgating drivers or large trucks. Tourists unfamiliar with the need to prepare for the left turn often stop abruptly, leading to honking horns and rear-end collisions. Hearing crashes from our home has become all too common. When traffic suddenly stops, it often signals a major accident, possibly with fatalities. It is disheartening to enjoy the peace and quiet, knowing the potential cost.

Safety on Highway 30 is a significant concern. Major accidents can block access, delaying emergency services and impacting lives. Few alternate routes exist, making it difficult for people to reach work, school, or loved ones.

Road conditions are dangerous, with landslides, settled water from heavy rains, potholes, and unsafe passing zones. Impatient drivers and unfamiliar tourists heading to and from the Oregon Coast exacerbate these hazards, leading to tragic outcomes.

People who have witnessed these accidents firsthand recount horrific scenes. One friend witnessed a fatal accident recently on Clatskanie Hill caused by a driver attempting to pass. As the driver fought for his life, he admitted to our friend that he shouldn't have tried to pass. Tragically, the driver did not survive. Just last December, a friend saw a driver sideswipe a semi and hit a fuel truck head-on as he tried to pass four vehicles in a no-passing zone. He was the first to reach the vehicle and was traumatized by the man's injuries, which ultimately proved fatal.

With a teenage driver in our home, the thought of them navigating Highway 30 is terrifying. Young drivers are particularly vulnerable to the dangers of this highway.

Improving Highway 30 to ensure safety is critical. Designating it as a safety corridor is a necessary first step. Enhancements such as improved signage, safer passing zones, and road repairs are essential.