

Joint Committee on Transportation
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

February 11, 2025

Christopher McMorran
PO Box 400
980 Applegate St.
Philomath, OR 97370

Co-Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christopher McMorran, and I am proud to serve as the Mayor of Philomath – my hometown. The City of Philomath is in support of SB 564 with an upcoming friendly amendment to change the scope of the bill from simply widening the highway to looking at all options to improve traffic flow and safety on the corridor.

U.S. Highway 20 is the longest continuous highway in the country, running from Boston, Massachusetts, to Newport, Oregon. However, in my biased opinion, the most important section of the highway is clearly when it also serves as Philomath's Main Street. The highway has undergone significant improvements to aid in traffic, pedestrian safety, and environmental stewardship over the past several decades. Just last year, the Philomath Downtown Streetscapes & Safety Improvement Project wrapped up on our portion of the corridor, making significant upgrades to our Downtown heart along this state & federal highway. This project, along with zoning reforms and other city initiatives, helped Philomath to become the very first community in Oregon to achieve the state's Climate-Friendly Area goals as set out by the Department of Land Conservation and Development.

However, the stretch between Corvallis & Philomath is a different story. The Philomath City Council unanimously agreed that this stretch is problematic and in need of attention to address traffic congestion, pedestrian safety, and outdated infrastructure. It is not uncommon to be stuck in bumper-to-bumper traffic for a mile back from the intersection of this highway and SW 53rd St, nearly back to the city limits of Philomath. This traffic creates idling cars and slows down transit options. It is also a very difficult and dangerous stretch to navigate as a pedestrian or biker, with blind hills, narrow shoulders, and no sidewalks despite significant population, commuter travel, and freight traffic.

Solutions are needed for this corridor, including addressing the intersection of the highway & SW 53rd St, addressing signaling and turn lanes, improving transit stops, and addressing pedestrian and bike safety.

The City of Philomath is appreciative of Senator Anderson and his team for hearing the concerns of our residents and introducing this bill, and are equally grateful for working with us to

amend the bill into a broader look that will prepare us well for holistic improvements in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris McMorran", written in a cursive style.

Christopher McMorran
Mayor, City of Philomath