

STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Business and Transportation

Fiscal: No Fiscal Impact

Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date: 04/06/15

Action: Do Pass.

Meeting Dates: 04/06

Vote:

Yeas: 3 - Beyer, Monroe, Riley

Exc: 2 - Girod, Thomsen

Prepared By: James LaBar, Committee Administrator

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Department of Transportation to make efforts by 2021 to complete installation of median barriers between opposing lanes of travel on interstate highways when the distance between the lanes is 100 feet or less, except if the segments of interstate highway are designated for emergency access or if the median barriers may create a safety or operational hazard to the public. Names new provision the Fritz-Fairchild Act.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Tragic events in September 2014 along Interstate 5
- Additional infrastructure to prevent median crossing accidents, including rumble strips and signage
- Funding challenges for transportation safety projects
- Median barrier needs on rural and urban highways in Oregon

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

In the last ten years there have been twenty crashes along Interstate 5 (I-5) in Salem that involved vehicles crossing the center median into oncoming traffic. In September 2014, Steven Fritz and Cary Marie Fairchild were killed in a head-on collision on Interstate 5 near Salem.

A February 2000 ODOT report states that the three-cable barrier installed along I-5 between Salem and Wilsonville have resulted in a decrease in both crossover crash fatalities and crash-related costs. Nine miles of cable were installed in December 1996 and another 12.9 miles in April 1998. The 2000 report showed that in the 1.7 years following installation of the twenty miles of cable barriers, there were zero crossover crashes. Crash-related costs have dropped from \$600,000 per year to \$200,000 per year on the initial nine-mile section, when comparing crashes before and after installation of the cable median barrier, the report stated, citing data from the National Safety Council to calculate crash-related costs to the public.

The cost per kilometer of the three-cable barrier was estimated to be \$26,357, compared to an estimated cost of \$93,504 per kilometer for an alternative concrete barrier. Considering installation, maintenance and repair costs, the cable barrier would save \$1,260 per kilometer per year over the concrete barrier, based on a thirty-year annual cost analysis, the report stated.