



City of Portland

February 24, 2017

Dear Members of the House Committee on Judiciary:

The City of Portland strongly supports House Bill 2597. A 2015 Oregon Appellate Court decision found that Oregon law prohibits talking and texting; however, not all other functions that can be performed on a cell phone are prohibited under the law. The decision set in motion a change to how Oregon's cell phone law is enforced to only those cases where a law enforcement officer witnesses talking or texting with a cell phone. HB 2597 changes Oregon's cell phone law to make it clear that any use of a cell phone or mobile electronic device while driving is not allowed.

No loss of life is acceptable on our streets. Safe streets are a top priority for Portland policy-makers and residents alike, and distracted driving is one of the dangerous behaviors that makes our streets less safe. The City of Portland has adopted a Vision Zero Action Plan with a goal of eliminating all traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2025. We've attached a copy of our Action Plan for your review.

Portland is moving quickly to implement Vision Zero. Portland City Council unanimously adopted the Vision Zero Action Plan last December. This plan contains 32 actions, one of which is to revise the Oregon distracted driving law to remove loopholes and to be consistent with federal guidance, which HB 2597 will do. The City of Portland is especially supportive of this bill because it requires ODOT to establish a diversion program. Diversion programs are important in supporting Portland's equity goals and have been successful in changing behaviors.

We want to thank Representative Olson, Representative Lininger, Senator Burdick, Representative Barker, Representative Esquivel, Representative Rayfield, and Representative Wilson for introducing this legislation and working to make Oregon's streets safer.

Sincerely,

Dan Saltzman
Commissioner, Bureau of Transportation
City of Portland, Oregon

Leah Treat
Director, Bureau of Transportation
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