

PBOT

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Dan Saltzman Commissioner **Leah Treat** Director

March 6, 2017

Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary
900 Court Street, NE, Hearing Room E
Salem, OR 97301

RE: SB 2

Dear Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

The City of Portland strongly supports legislation to discourage distracted driving. SB 2 will strengthen Oregon's distracted driving laws to ensure state statute adequately addresses the use of modern smart phones and electronic devices.

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. SB 2 changes Oregon 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. Equity is a critical component of the Plan, and Portland's Vision Zero Committee has expressed strong interest in ensuring that penalties resulting from traffic violations do not unintentionally negatively impact lower income Oregonians.

The City of Portland supports the proposed update of state distracted driving statutes in SB 2 to address use of cell phone and electronic device functions other than calling or texting. We also encourage exploring ways to lessen the adverse impacts of the proposed penalties on low-income communities, including lower first-time penalties and the option to complete a distracted driving avoidance course in lieu of paying the first citation. Thank you to Senate President Courtney and members of the committee for your work on this important legislation to make Oregon's streets safer.

Sincerely,



Leah Treat
Director, Bureau of Transportation



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