



March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Chair Beyer,

The purpose of this letter is to express support of SB 778 on behalf of Pacific Outdoor Advertising. Pacific Outdoor is a Portland based company that employs 26 local residents.

We believe it is time for Oregon to update its code in regards to the treatment of Outdoor Advertising Signs when impacted by public projects and SB 778 does just that.

Currently when signs are “taken” as part of a project the highway department views the sign structures as personal property and only offers sign companies relocation expenses or the depreciated steel value whichever is less. This despite the fact that sign companies are taxed on signs as real property. As you may or may not know the billboard industry in Oregon is highly regulated and billboard companies rely on their signs to operate their business and retain their employees. In most cases when signs are removed local ordinances prohibit the rebuilding of signs in different locations. SB 778 helps ODOT work with the sign companies earlier in the process to find suitable locations within a project to relocate the sign structure(s). This avoids the department from having to acquire the sign, resulting in lower project costs to the state.

In situations where signs cannot be relocated, SB 778 require just compensation to be paid to the sign companies for their loss of property. This concept is in line with federal guidelines, legal precedent, and the treatment of signs in states such as Washington, California, and Idaho.

Without the passage of SB 778 the next “taking” of a sign structure by ODOT that is of significance will likely result in costly and lengthy litigation to the state which we believe will end up with the same result, the state treating sign companies fairly and in accordance with FHWA guidelines.

For these reasons we ask for your support of SB 778 to remove the inevitable litigation that is looming, modernize Oregon’s statutes regarding signs, and create the fairness that business owners deserve from their government.

Thank you,

Dan Dhruva  
General Manager