

April 11, 2017

Robert Alan Ping  
8102 N Dwight Avenue,  
Portland, Oregon 97203

Representative Caddy McKeown  
Chair, House Committee on Transportation Policy  
79th OREGON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Re: House Bill 3230

Dear Representative McKeown,

My wife and I have two school-aged children who attend a public charter school 3 miles from home. We would prefer that they ride bikes to school, in order to get some exercise and fresh air, and to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution in the neighborhood. But there is one stretch of roadway that is dangerous, plus there are several difficult intersections to deal with along the way. For this reason, the only way we are comfortable riding bikes to school is when we can travel with several other people, in order to create “strength in numbers”, assuming that will improve driver behaviors at those tough spots. So, we often will organize a ‘bike train’, which is a common Safe Routes to School encouragement program activity that helps to increase bike riding.

**I urge you to pass HB3230.** HB 3230 would dedicate \$16 million dollars per year for Safe Routes to School infrastructure and programs. Safe Routes to School is an evidence-based program that increases physical activity and improves safety for children and youth and their families and neighborhoods.

According to the US Surgeon General, children and adolescents should be physically active for at least 60 minutes every day, but only 27% of high school students reported levels of physical activity that met the guideline. One of the solutions is to promote programs and policies that make it easy for students to walk before, during, and after school. Safe Routes to School programs include encouragement and educational activities like walking school buses and bike trains that increase safety and physical activity by grouping students and adults together in the trip to and from school, reducing personal safety risks, and traffic enforcement and other program activities that encourage families to consider walking and bicycling to school who may otherwise have chosen to drive.

**I urge you to ensure that a robust portion of the funding made available through HB3230 is dedicated to the non-infrastructure aspects of Safe Routes to School programs** – traffic safety education, encouragement programs and activities, and

enforcement of traffic laws. Infrastructure is critical, of course, but when it comes to families – “if you build it, they will NOT necessarily come” – is a common reality. There are many reasons why parents will not let their kids walk or bike to and from school or in their daily lives. Infrastructure helps alleviate some of those fears, but not all, and not even the ones that matter most to parents when they are surveyed, such as personal safety fears not directly related to roadway design.

Studies have found that engineering improvements (such as improving intersections and adding sidewalks) were associated with walking or biking rates going up 18 percent over five years, and education and encouragement programs were associated with walking and biking going up by 25 percent over five years. **A school that combines engineering improvements with education and encouragement could potentially see increases in walking or biking of up to 43 percent over 5 years.**

Thank you for your consideration of HB3230, and to the importance of ensuring that education, encouragement and enforcement are specifically protected and funded going forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Ping". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "R" and a horizontal line extending from the bottom of the "g".

Robert Alan Ping  
Executive Director  
Walkable and Livable Communities Institute