

Testimony: Vision Zero Task Force (HB 2667)

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2667 establishing a task force on Vision Zero in Oregon. This bill creates an opportunity to convene the right stakeholders and experts to develop a performance-based approach to eliminating deaths on our roadways, which we applaud.

In addition, this bill is part of a broader discussion on performance, accountability, transparency, and return on investment for our transportation tax dollars.

If we look at ODOT website information about the two major safety programs at ODOT, we see a contrast. The All Roads Transportation Safety (ARTS) Program has relatively accessible information about the overall strategy for infrastructure investments in safety and some data to justify that strategy.

The Transportation Safety Division web page provides safety information for users of the transportation system, but little information on how the division's investments may or may not be targeted toward proven strategies to improve safety. This lack of information indicates that we may not be getting the most for our tax dollar, and undermines public trust in the agency.

The contrast between the ARTS program and the Transportation Safety Division highlights the need for transparent, criteria-driven investment choices to ensure we are getting the most for our transportation dollar and that transportation investments will improve safety, especially as the legislature considers raising additional transportation funding.

HB 2667 is an excellent step toward convening a conversation on performance and return-on-investment in the context of safety.

Another bill, HB 2532 (Reardon), would also improve accountability by requiring an objective evaluation of transportation projects against several important goals, including safety.

Oregonians deserve to be safe on our roadways. We also deserve the best return-on-investment for our tax dollar, and enough transparency and accountability to know that is what we're getting. HB 2667 creates the opportunity for Oregon to develop a transparent and accountable approach on safety. HB 2532 delivers transparency and accountability for Oregonians on all of ODOT's transportation investments.