



# City of Gold Beach

29592 Ellensburg Avenue • Gold Beach, OR 97444

Administration: 541-247-7029 • Police: 541-247-6671 • [www.goldbeachoregon.gov](http://www.goldbeachoregon.gov)

Visitor Center: 541-247-7526 • [www.visitgoldbeach.com](http://www.visitgoldbeach.com)

Wednesday, February 20, 2019

House Majority Leader Jennifer Williamson  
Representative Jeff Barker  
Representative Shelly Boshart Davis  
Representative Mike McLane  
Representative Karin A. Power  
Representative Duane A. Stark  
Senator Michael Dembrow  
Senator Lew Frederick  
Senator James I. Manning Jr.  
Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson

**RE: OPPOSITION TO SB 776 & HB 2614**

Honorable Representatives & Senators:

Two bills have been introduced that could severely impact our Municipal Court's ability to adequately secure compliance with traffic laws within the City of Gold Beach, and securing of payments of fines for traffic offenses. SB 776 & HB 2614 seek to eliminate our ability to suspend *driving privileges* for failure to appear or to pay fines. Currently municipal courts have the ability to suspend *driving privileges* if drivers who have received citations for the breaking of traffic laws *choose* to not appear or *choose* not pay their fines.

I'm sure you are probably familiar with Gold Beach, but state Hwy 101 goes through the middle of Gold Beach. Gold Beach is small (pop. 2300) and most major development is clustered around the highway. Our high school and the only pharmacy are located directly adjacent to Hwy 101. Because we are the county seat of Curry County, we also have the Courthouse and Fairgrounds directly adjacent to Hwy 101. Enforcement of traffic speed laws is essential to the safety of our citizens and visitors. Most folks that live in Gold Beach or the outlying areas drive within the posted speed limit because we are conscious of the safety the speed limits provide.

Unfortunately, most out of state travelers passing through our town drive well in excess of the posted speed of 30 mph. Our officers routinely ticket drivers that exceed the posted speed limit by more than 15 mph, and some as high as 25 mph over the limit. Drivers that are flying through Gold Beach at speeds in excess of 45 mph deserve and earn their speeding tickets. Many out-of-state ticketed drivers refuse to pay their earned tickets because they believe

*The City of Gold Beach is dedicated to enhancing quality of life, while promoting the health, safety, and welfare of our citizens, businesses, and visitors in the most fiscally responsible manner. In doing this, the City will respect the past, respond to current concerns, and plan for the future, while maintaining environmental sensitivity in our beach oriented community.*

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they will likely never return to our town or to Oregon. They flagrantly broke the traffic laws of our community, and they flagrantly refuse to pay the ticket they earned as a result of their law breaking. We currently have a very effective means of ensuring compliance of our traffic laws: we have the ability to suspend the *driving privileges* of those individuals that *choose* to not take responsibility for their actions. Please note that I italicized *privileges* and *choose*. It is a *privilege* to drive in the state of Oregon, not a right. It is a person's right to *choose* whether to comply with laws or not. If a driver does not treat driving as a *privilege* and they *choose* to ignore laws, then there *must* be consequences to those choices. If the House and Senate pass these bills as proposed, those consequences are effectively taken away. Why apply for a driver's license if there is no consequence for not obtaining one? Why should anyone pay fines they earned if there is no consequence for non-payment? To not have consequences, in my opinion, penalizes those of us that choose to treat our ability to operate a motor vehicle as a *privilege* and also penalizes those individuals that accept responsibility for their actions and *choose* to pay their fines in a timely fashion.

I believe your concern when you drafted these bills is: immediate license suspension without due process? But, we (and I think most municipal courts) do not *immediately* suspend someone's license. We suspend folks only as a last resort after they have *chosen* to not communicate with us. About 85% of the individuals that receive suspensions are out-of-state drivers that wrongly believe their ticket in tiny Gold Beach will have no effect on them. Without the ability to suspend driving privileges we simply would not have the mechanism to enforce collection of delinquent fines. These are not low-income individuals that aren't able to get to their job because their license was suspended. These are individuals of means that are consciously refusing to accept responsibility for breaking the safety laws of another state.

We offer everyone the ability to work out payment plans with us (with no added interest) in order to avoid collection action or suspension of driving privileges. As long as individuals communicate with us, and make consistent (however small) progress towards resolution of their traffic citations, we do not suspend their driving privileges.

The City of Gold Beach urges you to not pass SB 776 and HB 2614—the passage of these measures would impact the safety of our citizens by removing the consequences of a driver's *choice* to break traffic safety laws in our community.

We wish to thank all of you for service to your respective communities and to our great state of Oregon.

Most Sincerely,



Jodi Fritts, City Administrator  
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