



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Transportation

Director's Office

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DATE: March 6, 2019

TO: Joint Committee on Transportation

FROM: Kris Strickler, Highway Division Administrator

SUBJECT: HB 2702(-1) – Speed Setting

INTRODUCTION

House Bill 2702(-1) allows the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to delegate speed setting authority to a city or county on any highway under their jurisdiction as a road authority.

BACKGROUND

Under current law, speeds on public roads in Oregon are set in one of two ways: 1) by the Legislature via statute; or 2) by ODOT after a speed zone engineering investigation is conducted. Speeds set pursuant to an engineering investigation consider roadside character, traffic mix and volume, crash data, roadway widths, and travel speeds. When determining the appropriate speed for a roadway, current practice considers the speed at which 85% of traffic travels (this is often known as the “85th percentile” methodology), and sets speeds accordingly (typically 5-10 miles per hour below the 85th percentile).

When designating speeds on Oregon roadways, ODOT aims to ensure consistency, predictability, and ease of enforcement and compliance for drivers across the state. By utilizing a standard methodology, ODOT ensures consistent speed zones for like segments of roadways.

DISCUSSION

House Bill 2702, with the (-1) amendment, allows ODOT to delegate its statutory authority for speed setting to a city or county with jurisdiction over a local facility.

In an ongoing workgroup effort, ODOT has engaged with other local jurisdictions across the state to strike an appropriate balance between local control of speed setting, and consistency and predictability for drivers and law enforcement. Delegation of speed setting authority to local governments pursuant to certain criteria is a step in the right direction; this proposed change represents a positive evolution of the current process of speed setting in Oregon, with the goal of increasing efficiency and ensuring safety of all road users.

ODOT looks forward to continued partnership with the City of Portland and members of the Joint Committee on Transportation.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any additional questions.