



ALEX CUYLER

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DATE: March 6, 2019
TO: Joint Committee on Transportation
RE: SB 558, relating to highway speeds

Co-Chairs Beyer and McKeown and Members of the Joint Committee:

I am unable to attend today's public hearing on SB 558 but wanted to let the Committee know that this is a measure that aligns well with efforts that Lane County and several of the cities within the county have been undertaking with respect to roadway safety.

Lane County had more traffic deaths than any other county in Oregon in 2014 and 2015 and continues to rank in the top three most fatal (roadway related) counties in Oregon. In 2018, the Board of County Commissioners adopted, for the first time ever, a traffic safety action plan. This plan requires multi-departmental participation, and has a team that reviews each fatal crash to learn what occurred, and where we might improve related engineering, education, or enforcement.

Our experience is that excessive speed, lane departures, and distracted driving are typically present in some combination for most of the fatalities we have reviewed. SB 558 will allow all cities within the state of Oregon for the first time to have a better degree of local control when it comes to setting speed limits. We believe that is good policy, particularly as more and more cities implement practices to reduce crashes and fatalities through a variety of practices. Giving them a new policy tool is important.

We further support the dash four amendments that will allow for expanded enforcement and provide greater flexibility for speed setting controls for counties. It will allow our engineering staff to focus their speed setting work on areas of the county where it is most needed.

The dash four will be very helpful in Lane County, where we see the majority of traffic fatalities occurring not inside urban areas, but more typically on rural roadways.

We urge the Committee to schedule a work session for this measure and adopt the dash four amendments into SB 558.

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY