



**Commissioner Chloe Eudaly**  
City of Portland

March 11, 2019

Representative Jeff Barker  
House Committee on Judiciary  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Barker and Members of the Committee:

The Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) supports HB 2614, which would eliminate driver's license suspensions as a consequence of a person not paying a traffic fine. PBOT's Racial Equity Plan commits to transportation investments and actions that have equitable outcomes for all groups of people. Portland's Vision Zero Action Plan is built on an equity framework and commits to addressing the disproportionate impact of traffic collisions on communities of color, low-income communities, and not perpetuating harm related to enforcement.

Research shows that driver's license suspension as punishment for failing to pay a traffic fine is ineffective and detrimental to low-income individuals. A report released by the Financial Justice Project's San Francisco Fine and Fees Task Force reveals that failure to pay traffic fines is rarely voluntary, but rather a result of inability to pay. The report explains how punitive measures for failure to pay a traffic fine fall disproportionately on people in poverty and people of color. Driver's license suspension is particularly ineffective at increasing the rate of payment because people often lose their job once they cannot drive to it. Furthermore, suspensions have ripple effects in the community since people who lose their driving privileges can no longer meet basic family needs such as transporting kids to school or activities, aiding sick or elderly family members, or running errands like grocery shopping. Finally, people who drive on a suspended license to maintain a job or care for their family are not insured – and uninsured drivers increase economic risk for all road users.

California addressed this issue by passing SB 185 in 2017, which prevents the automatic suspension of driver's licenses for people unable to pay fines or fees for minor traffic tickets. It also requires courts to determine violators' ability to pay before setting fine amounts. Mississippi also ended driver's license suspension for failure to pay a traffic fine in 2017, and a federal judge in Tennessee found the practice of suspending licenses to be unconstitutional under the 14th Amendment.

A 2018 investigation from the publication Street Roots shows that driver's license suspension is pervasive in Oregon. The report found that the Oregon DMV issued 90,600 driver's license suspensions in 2017 due to failure to pay a traffic fine, disproportionately impacting low-income individuals and people of color. It also suggested that the practice does not increase payment of traffic fines.

Driver's license suspension for failure to pay a traffic fine is a policy that has disproportionate impacts on vulnerable individuals and is not an effective mechanism to increase payment rates. HB 2614 would repeal this practice, supporting the City of Portland's racial equity goals and making it easier for Portland to implement its Vision Zero Action Plan equitably. For these reasons PBOT supports HB 2614.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chloe Eudaly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chloe Eudaly  
Commissioner, City of Portland