

To: Joint Committee on Transportation
From: Audubon Society of Portland, Climate Solutions, Oregon Environmental Council, Oregon League of Conservation Voters, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, and Sierra Club Oregon Chapter
RE: House Bill 2015
DATE: April 17, 2019

Dear Co-Chairs Beyer and McKeown, and Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation:

Our organizations work to protect our climate and environment. We submit these comments in support of House Bill 2015, the Equal Access to Roads Act.

Everyone deserves clean air and water, and a chance for a healthy and vibrant life – including Oregon’s immigrant communities, who are on the frontlines of climate change. The current law puts many immigrants without legal status in an impossible position: either drive without a license and risk arrest and deportation, or not drive and be unable to provide for their family.

As you know, House Bill 2015 would expand eligibility for a standard driver license to all Oregon residents, regardless of citizenship status. It would allow all Oregon residents who pass written and driving tests, pay the fees, and provides proof of identity and residency to receive a driver license.

Our organizations support a healthy, low carbon transportation system that is safe, accessible, and affordable. Expanding transportation options would reduce the need for people to drive to meet their daily needs. Yet in many communities, especially in smaller towns and rural areas, driving is the only practical option for people to get around. It is not practical or safe for people to walk for miles on roads without sidewalks to get to and from work or take care of their families. We shouldn’t allow our transportation system to work for only some Oregonians, while a driving prohibition prevents other Oregonians from getting to work and school.

House Bill 2015 upholds Oregon values of fairness, looking out for our neighbors, and treating others as we would want to be treated. Passing the bill would mean that Oregonians no longer have to live in fear of their families being torn apart simply because they are taking their kids to school, going to work, or taking care of their family or neighbors.

People come to the United States and to Oregon to create a better life for their families, and are increasingly coming due to environmental and economic devastation caused by the climate crisis. As climate and environmental organizations, we stand with our

partners in working to ensure all Oregonians, regardless of country of birth, are treated with dignity and respect.

We hope you join us in supporting House Bill 2015.

Sincerely,

Micah Meskel, Audubon Society of Portland

Meredith Connolly, Climate Solutions

Raphaela Hsu-Flanders, Oregon Environmental Council

Doug Moore, Oregon League of Conservation Voters

Kelly Campbell, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility

Trevor Kaul, Sierra Club Oregon Chapter