



Jessica Vega Pederson
Multnomah County Commissioner

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Joint Committee on Transportation
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

April 17, 2019

Dear Co-Chairs Beyer & McKeown, and members of the committee,

I write to you today in support of HB 2015, the Equal Access to Roads Act. Due to the requirements of the federal Real ID Act, Oregon is now presented with an opportunity to make our roads safer, expand opportunity for Oregonians, and uphold the values that are fundamental to our state.

Oregon is required by the federal government to implement stricter standards for issuing IDs to those who wish to fly interstate and enter federal buildings, but that legislation also allows the state to issue non-Real ID-compliant IDs that are similar to those we issue today. Doing so, and expanding access to those IDs to those who may not have documentation will make our roads safer for all Oregonians.

Many Oregonians today do not have the ability to get enhanced drivers licenses. This includes those who are older, immigrants & refugees, low-income households, and survivors of domestic violence. However, we know that it is very difficult to live a modern life without access to roads, especially in the more rural areas of our state. That means folks still drive, but do so without having demonstrated the standards we expect all drivers to uphold. By passing this legislation, all drivers in Oregon will be required to pass a written safety exam and a driving test, and show proof of insurance and identity to get a driver's license. Having drivers demonstrate the basic knowledge and skills needed to safely drive will make the roads safer for all of us and those we care for. We know that this measure is effective and shows results. States that have passed similar measures have seen lower accident and hit and run levels, and higher rates of insured driving.

Passing HB 2015 will also expand economic and social opportunity for all who call Oregon home.

As I said earlier, many Oregonians are unable to access driving privileges today, and we know that for many in our state driving is necessary for economic security. Right now, many immigrants & refugees, older adults, and survivors of violence are faced with an impossible choice: drive without an ID and risk arrest and/or deportation, or be unable to provide for themselves and their families. By providing access to a standard license, all Oregonians will be able to drive safely on the road and have a legal ID to present throughout their lives. That will provide peace of mind for us all, and allow those who currently are unable to work or travel to live a more productive and prosperous life in our society.

And finally, passing the Equal Access to Roads Act will uphold the values that are fundamental to Oregon.

Oregonians spoke strongly in the last election that they are very much against the push to “other”-ize immigrants & refugees. We believe that you should be able to drive your kids to school or to your job or the store without the fear of being stopped and facing deportation. We may disagree on how to fix our broken immigration system, but we should all agree on that. By passing this act, we can reaffirm those values that Oregonians have demonstrated time and time again.

For those reasons, I urge you to pass the Equal Access to Roads Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Vega Pederson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jessica Vega Pederson
Multnomah County Commissioner, District 3