



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

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DATE: April 24, 2019

TO: Joint Committee on Transportation

FROM: Amy Joyce, Legislative Liaison

SUBJECT: HB 3213 – County Safety Corridors

INTRODUCTION

House Bill 3213 authorizes a county to establish safety corridors and post signs in those corridors indicating fines are doubled. The bill does not impact or otherwise modify the Department of Transportation's (ODOT) existing state Safety Corridor Program. ODOT recommends county-established safety corridors utilize similar criteria to ensure consistency across the state.

DISCUSSION

In 1989 ODOT designated the first two safety corridors in the state. The goal of the Safety Corridor Program is to identify short segments of state highways (2-10 miles) with higher rates of serious and fatal injury crashes than similar types of roadways, and to reduce these crashes in the short-term through partnerships using engineering, enforcement, and education. Each component contributes to the goal of reducing serious injury and fatal crashes by encouraging drivers to change behavior and drive safely. Since the program's creation, there have been 19 corridors designated, 16 of which have been decommissioned due to their success in improving safety.

ODOT's Transportation Safety Division manages the Safety Corridor Program on the State Highway System. However, the program is locally coordinated in each community. To ensure success, the Safety Corridor Program requires local involvement including city or county agency governments, interested citizens, businesses, schools, and any other agencies that have a vested interest in the safety of their roadways.

Under current law, the only statutory provision related to safety corridors is a provision allowing doubling of fines in these corridors. In the interest of establishing a consistent and predictable set of standards for designating safety corridors, ODOT established criteria for when a safety corridor should be designated:

- Five year average of fatal/serious injury crash rate is at or above 150% of statewide average;
- Corridor length is deemed manageable;
- Law enforcement agencies commit to making the corridor a patrol priority; and
- Stakeholder group meets regularly.

When the safety corridor has proven to be successful in reducing serious traffic crashes and the roadway no longer qualifies under the Safety Corridor Designation Criteria, the corridor is decommissioned and signs are removed.

Safety corridors can be a critical tool for communities to ensure public safety on their roadways. Ensuring a standard and consistent approach to the designation of these corridors is critical to their efficacy. ODOT recommends HB 3213 be amended to establish this designation criteria by rule, in consultation with local governments and law enforcement partners.

SUMMARY

House Bill 3213 allows a county to establish and post signs on a county designated safety corridor, authorizing the county to issue double fines for traffic offenses committed on those safety corridors.

ODOT looks forward to the opportunity to work on amendments to this measure with the bill sponsors to strike a balanced and consistent approach between state and county safety corridor programs.