



PEARMINE FARMS, INC.

**12223 RIVER ROAD NE
GERVAIS, OREGON 97026
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To: Joint Committee On Transportation
From: Molly McCargar, Owner/Operator Pearmine Farms, Inc.
Date: April 24, 2019
RE: In support of HB 3213

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

My name is Molly McCargar. I am here today to ask for your support of HB 3213.

I am a 4th generation farmer of Pearmine Farms near Gervais. Our farm's location and much of our operations are on River Road NE in North Marion County. We are 9 miles south of St. Paul and roughly 6.5 miles north of Keizer City limits. This area of Marion County is very rural and mostly dominated by farmland. These roads are long straight stretches of roadway and mostly posted with a 55 miles per hour speed limit with dips and slight curves, add in farm equipment driving at slower speeds and drivers are easily caught off guard, especially when unfamiliar with the area.

With population increases in the Central Willamette Valley and many people choosing to not live in towns or cities where they work, commuter traffic has also increased between Salem and Tigard, Hillsboro, Beaverton areas. North Marion County, specifically, River, French Prairie and McKay Roads have seen huge increases in traffic over our rural roads the past several years with an especially large increase since the Newberg-Dundee bypass opened in January 2018.

With that increased traffic comes increased accidents, injuries and sadly, fatalities. The first fatality that really hit home was summer of 2014 when our friend and farming neighbor, Scott Miller was killed after being hit from behind while driving his tractor down French Prairie Road not more than .5 mile from his home. Scott's death was not only heartbreaking and tragic, it made many of us realize our roads are no longer being used as they were designed for, getting agricultural products to market, they're now being used as back road commuting highways. Nearly every farmer (and non-farmer) I know who live and farm on River, French Prairie and McKay Roads have at least one if not a dozen or more stories of near misses, close calls or accidents they've witnessed or been a part of. In less than a year there have been 10 fatalities on McKay Road alone. And it's only a matter of time before we have another tragedy involving farming operators versus commuter vehicles.

I am also a mom of four daughters, one of which is 15 and will be driving on her own soon with a second just behind her, I've been focused on teaching them defensive driving skills and safest routes in our regular driving routines. While I understand that vehicle accidents can happen any time and that my daughters are likely to get into a car accident at some point in their driving life, their odds have increased greatly before ever being able to legally drive with the increased traffic on our rural roads. Statistics show that 52% of accidents occur within 5 miles of home and jumps to 77% within 15 miles or less of home. That means they have a greater than 7 in 10 possibility to be in a car accident every time they drive to St. Paul to buy their FFA animals feed at Marion Ag Farm Store.

Our farm takes road safety very serious. Every one of our tractors, implements, trucks and trailers has updated, bright flashing LED lights, the proper and legal SMV signs and move equipment with pilot vehicles either leading or following when necessary. When driving open station (cables) tractors the operator wears a bright yellow safety vest. We have replaced all of the old seatbelts on our tractors with new and properly functioning seatbelts and our operators wear them when traveling on roadways and whenever necessary. We are doing whatever we can to make ourselves visible and be protected.

I have had the opportunity to help work with several groups to help bring awareness to road safety around farm equipment on the highway. I was able to connect Pape Machinery with Oregon Aglink and Marion County Sheriff's Office to create roadside signs and bumper stickers which are plastered all over Marion County and beyond. Our farm has worked with MCSO displaying a mobile safety billboard created in partnership with Oregon Farm Bureau and Oregon Aglink, as well as make a PSA about driving safely around farm equipment on roadways.

All of these things have been awesome but it's not been enough. It was a little over two years ago, and after another close call while waiting to turn into my driveway I thought of the concept of Agricultural Safety Corridors on county roads. Hitting drivers where it counts, their pocket books. County Sheriff offices know where all of their highly travelled agricultural farmland is and they could designate those areas as these safety corridors. I had shared the concept with a few folks but nothing came out of it until my friend, Representative Boshart-Davis who had been recently elected, who also has several rural road stories of her own in Linn County, listened to the idea and with the help of some smart folks came up with this simple, and hopefully easy to pass, piece of legislation. And while I know it won't fix the problem of increased traffic on our roads, I sure hope it will make drivers aware and help slow down the number of accidents and fatalities. I don't necessarily want a safety corridor program to be looked at as a long-term solution, but rather an opportunity for traffic safety education and awareness of our rural roads, ultimately with the goal of decommissioning these corridors on our rural roads when they no longer qualify because safety becomes a priority of drivers traveling through our beautiful farmland.

Thank you for your consideration and I urge your support of HB 3213.

**OREGON
FARM
BUREAU**

**SAFE DRIVING IS
EVERYONE'S
RESPONSIBILITY**



WATCH FOR FARM EQUIPMENT. PLEASE DRIVE SAFELY.



