



Joint Committee on Transportation
Re: HB 2846

May 13, 2019

Co-Chair Beyer, Co-Chair McKeown, Co-Vice Chairs Boquist and Noble, and members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 2846, to increase the safety of community highways by facilitating jurisdictional transfer of candidate highways. My name is Jenny Lee, and I am the Advocacy Director at the Coalition of Communities of Color.

The Coalition of Communities of Color is an alliance of culturally specific community-based organizations with representation from the following communities of color: African, African American, Asian, Latino, Middle Eastern, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Slavic. Our mission is to address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities; and to organize our communities for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice and prosperity.

We believe that everyone should have access to safe streets and sidewalks for the wellbeing of their community. Throughout Oregon, there are state highways which function as city streets or county roads. They serve as the main road for business districts, providing vital local transport of goods, and connect people within their communities and to neighboring cities and towns. As transportation patterns have changed, these highways often fall into neglect, making them dangerous for the community members and businesses that rely on them. A number of the Coalition of Communities of Color's member organizations provide critical educational, health, and other social services, but many are located along poorly maintained highways, presenting a safety risk for the children, youth, and families that they serve.

Communities know their own transportation needs best, and the process proposed here centers them as decision-makers. Communities must be empowered to identify local solutions to these unsafe highways, including their maintenance and design. Currently, individual jurisdictions and communities must advocate for jurisdictional transfer on their own. The state needs a coordinated approach that allows local communities with candidate highways to work together to develop better strategies for this process. The Safe Community Highways for All Oregonians will allow communities throughout Oregon to use jurisdictional transfer to take control of candidate highways and improve local safety.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB 2846 to begin the process of creating safer community highways throughout Oregon.

Sincerely,

Jenny Lee
Advocacy Director
Coalition of Communities of Color

