



To:

Joint Committee on Transportation
jct.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

May 13, 2019

Dear Co-Chair Beyer, Co-Chair McKeown, Co-Vice Chair Boquist, Co-Vice Chair Noble, and Members of the Joint Transportation Committee:

I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO) to express our **support for House Bill 2846, the Safe Community Highways Act**. As a statewide, grassroots organization we work with Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders across the state of Oregon to advance social justice. We envision a just and equitable world where Asians and Pacific Islanders are fully engaged in the social, economic and political issues that affect us. APANO is physically located on one of these community highways impacted by this bill, in the heart of the Jade District in SE Portland. This neighborhood includes one of the most diverse census tracts in the state, with a population comprised of a majority of people of color, among them a vibrant community of multigenerational Chinese and Vietnamese immigrants.

The Jade District is a place-based, community building and economic development program of APANO, focused on improving the ten-block radius surrounding SE 82nd Avenue and SE Division Street without displacing the residents and small business owners in the neighborhood. Community members have consistently identified traffic safety and walkability as a top issue. While rising costs and development pressures threaten the neighborhood, our communities also need investments that support their daily safety, stability, and resilience. As a high crash corridor, outer SE Division and 82nd Ave are a particularly dangerous area for pedestrians, and multiple immigrant elders have died in traffic fatalities within blocks of each other in the Jade District. Our families deserve safe streets on which to walk, bike, operate mobility devices, access transit, and drive. APANO and other local organizations have been able to work with the City of Portland to make changes to SE Division and engage in a community-led effort to address the needs of the area. However, because SE 82nd Ave is a state highway, we are limited in furthering our effort.

Existing state highways that act like city streets or county roads are not being prioritized for maintenance and are neglected. To ensure that all our families can thrive, we need infrastructure investments such as public lighting, more crosswalks, multilingual signage, and safe areas for exercise and play. Passing Safe Community Highways for All Oregonians will allow communities throughout Oregon to assume control of candidate highways through jurisdictional transfer. This Act allows all communities in Oregon with candidate highways to work together to

develop strategies for jurisdictional transfer, so local communities can correctly prioritize the safety and maintenance needs of these important roadways.

Our work is intersectional, tying together the need for healthy environments, community economic development, safe and connected communities. We center the power, voices and issues of residents and small business owners who are culturally specific, immigrants and/or limited English proficiency -- folks who are often shut out of decisions that directly impact their lives. With this bill, we allow the opportunity for communities to inform how these neglected and dangerous community highways are maintained and designed to fit the needs of the residents in place.

I thank you for your time and consideration, and urge the Committee to vote in support of HB 2846.

Sincerely,

Robin Ye
Political Director
APANO