

# PBOT

PORTLAND BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION

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**Chloe Eudaly** Commissioner **Chris Warner** Director

February 10, 2020

Dear Members of the House Committee on Judiciary:

The City of Portland and the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) support HB 4142, which would eliminate the existing minimum fee when giving violators a payment plan option for traffic violation fines.

Portland's Racial Equity Strategy and PBOT's Racial Equity Plan commit to transportation investments and actions that have equitable outcomes for all groups of people. Portland's Vision Zero Action Plan is built on an equity framework and commits to addressing the disproportionate impact of traffic collisions on communities of color and low-income communities and not perpetuating harm related to enforcement.

The current traffic fine system has a disproportionate impact on low-income people. While traffic fines are useful for encouraging safer driving, we should not be engaging in practices that further burden residents who are already struggling financially. Imposing a traffic fine on a low-income family may force them to choose between missing a rent payment, not buying food, or failing to pay the traffic fine—this perpetuates a continuous spiral of debt.

A report released by the Financial Justice Project's San Francisco Fine and Fees Task Force reveals that failure to pay traffic fines is rarely voluntary—it is overwhelmingly a result of a person's inability to pay. The report sets a goal of "ensur[ing] that consequences for transportation violations hold people accountable, but do not pose an inequitable burden for low-income" community members. The Task Force report highlights easier access to payment plans, including eliminating payment plan fees, as a critical step toward achieving that goal.

HB 4142 does not entirely eliminate fines, but it does give the courts the flexibility to offer payment plans without an additional fee when appropriate. The existing \$50 minimum fee is sometimes more than half the original fine amount, adding a significant burden for vulnerable community members who are struggling to meet other financial obligations.

Payment plans are an essential tool for supporting low-income individuals and families, and the minimum fee has a disproportionate impact on those same individuals. Ironically, the fee can actually lead to lower payment rates. HB 4142 would allow payment plans without the fee, supporting the City of Portland's racial equity goals and making it easier for Portland to implement our Vision Zero Action Plan equitably. For these reasons, HB 4142 has my strong support, the support of the Portland Bureau of Transportation, and the support of the City of Portland.

Sincerely,



Commissioner Chloe Eudaly



*The Portland Bureau of Transportation fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the ADA Title II, and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. For accommodations, complaints and information, call (503) 823-5185, City TTY (503) 823-6868, or use Oregon Relay Service: 711.*