



February 11, 2020

Representative Tawna Sanchez, Chair  
House Committee on Judiciary  
900 Court St. NE, H-273  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Sanchez:

The Deschutes County Board of Commissioners wishes to express opposition to HB 4065, which would eliminate courts' ability to suspend driving privileges of defendants who are convicted of traffic offenses and fail to pay court-imposed fines. According to our Justice of the Peace, the potential for loss of legal driving privileges is the most important tool courts have to ensure traffic fines are paid and driving behavior changes.

Should the possible loss of driving privileges for failure to pay traffic fines no longer apply, our Justice Court estimates it will lose half of its annual revenue – more than a quarter of a million dollars each year. This loss of funding will jeopardize the Court's ability to cover its operating expenses. Statutorily mandated payments to the State of Oregon will also decrease significantly.

Any citizen who wants to talk with our Justice of the Peace about his/her traffic citation is given that opportunity. Citizens may also make a written appearance. Every letter is submitted to the Justice of the Peace for individual consideration. For citizens that avail themselves of this opportunity upon receiving a Driving While Suspended citation, the most common outcome is no fine if the citizen gets their license reinstated on a timeline the citizen agrees is doable.

Our Justice Court, like many courts throughout the state, only suspends a license for non-payment when a defendant defaults on a payment agreement that is entered into mutually with the court. In Deschutes County, staff works to ease the financial burden for defendants by offering payment plans with payments as low as \$25 per month. Once a payment plan has been established, action is only taken if a payment is 11 or more days past the mutually agreed upon monthly due date. At this point a Notice of Collection action is sent and the person is given an additional 60 days to get in compliance with the court. If no action is taken within that 60 days, a Notice of License Sanction is sent to the

Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles, who in turn gives the person additional time to get into compliance with the court.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit our input. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Laura Skundrick, Deschutes County Administrative Analyst by phone at 541-330-4627 or by email at [Laura.Skundrick@deschutes.org](mailto:Laura.Skundrick@deschutes.org).

Sincerely,

DESCHUTES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patti Adair". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Patti Adair, Chair

c: Members of the House Committee on Judiciary  
Senators Lynn Findley, Tim Knopp, and Dennis Linthicum  
Representatives Daniel Bonham, Cheri Helt, Vikki Breese Iverson, and Jack Zika