

PBOT

PORTLAND BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION

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Jo Ann Hardesty Commissioner **Chris Warner** Director

March 9, 2021

Senator Lee Beyer, Co-Chair
Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Transportation
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 466- Creates Abandoned Recreational Vehicle Disposal Revolving Account within State Highway Fund

Co-Chair Beyer, Co-Chair McLain, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dave Benson and I am the Parking and Regulatory Director for the Portland Bureau of Transportation. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for SB 466.

Starting in late 2016, we began seeing a growing number of derelict and abandoned RVs on City of Portland streets. In 2017, because local towing companies were very reluctant to tow these vehicles, we modified existing policies to remove these RVs from the streets, but more significantly, we developed new processes to tow, hold and subsequently demolish these derelict vehicles. For more than three years, we have learned many things about the business of legally demolishing RVs. These structures were designed as temporary homes for their occupants and as such pose a number of challenges, not the least of which is mitigating the hazards, including removing garbage including dangerous sharps, draining and removing sewage tanks, testing for and removing components that contain asbestos, and removing and storing the personal property of persons that had lived in these vehicles.

We have worked through several towing arrangements in this period of time and are now on our second vendor that handles the demolition. To date, we have demolished 950 RVs at a taxpayer cost of \$2.0M and an average cost of approximately \$2,000 per unit.

The graph below reflects the number of complaints we have received in Portland related to recreational vehicles and the number of them dismantled since 2017.

Year	Estimated Complaints	Number of RVs Dismantled
2017	4162	162
2018	3211	408
2019	3671	204
2020	1933	121
2021	598	55
		Total 950



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Our experiences have allowed us to reflect on this proposed legislation and offer the following recommendations:

First, because of the hazardous wastes these vehicles contain we believe an environmental regulator should establish reasonable administrative rules governing demolition.

Second, we would suggest that certified dismantlers receive additional training and licensing for hazardous waste disposal.

Third, the proposed bill authorizes up to \$5,000.00 per vehicle which may be reasonable as long as there is appropriate oversight for the reimbursements.

Fourth, the program seems to provide reimbursement for vehicles towed from both public and private property. Previous discussions have focused on towing only from public property. If private property is included, obviously the program will be more costly.

Fifth, we believe the proposed legislation should be amended to allow public agencies that have an established program or establish a new program to seek reimbursement from the fund.

Finally, as proposed, we question how the proposed \$12 surcharge was established. Our experience is that recovering and demolishing abandoned RVs is expensive. This Committee may want to consider a higher surcharge, perhaps set at \$25 each time the registration is renewed. There are likely hundreds if not thousands of RVs in the public right of way in Oregon. We believe it is reasonable to require an owner of a recreational vehicle that costs from tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars to pay \$25 every two years to dispose of those that are abandoned, especially in the early implementation stages.

Thank you for taking the time to review our comments and suggestions. We will be happy to be included in discussions about how to make this bill better and are always willing to share the experience we have gained over the last three years doing this work.

We are hopeful that this legislation will be successful and provide Oregonians and local jurisdictions with some relief from this growing problem.

Sincerely,

Dave Benson
Parking and Regulatory Group Director
Portland Bureau of Transportation