



March 25, 2021

Joint Committee on Transportation

Re: HB 2744-1

Co-Chair Beyer, Co-Chair McLain, Co-Vice Chairs Boquist and Noble, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 2744-1, to increase the safety of community highways by facilitating jurisdictional transfer of candidate highways. My name is Jenny Lee, and I am the Deputy Director at the Coalition of Communities of Color. CCC is an alliance of culturally-specific community based organizations dedicated to taking action for racial justice. We believe that everyone should have access to safe streets and sidewalks for their safety and the wellbeing of their community.

Throughout Oregon, there are state highways which function as regular city streets or local roads but were never designed to do so. Functionally, they serve as the main road for business districts, providing vital local transport of goods, and connect people both within their communities and to neighboring cities and towns. But as transportation patterns have changed, these highways often fall into neglect, making them dangerous for the community members and businesses that rely on them. For CCC, some of our 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. Many of the families and children that they serve must navigate these unsafe roads. We've also seen the tragic results when our community members are killed on these roads, and we know that this hurts our Black, Indigenous, and people of color community members the most.

We should also have the opportunity to learn how this is being experienced throughout the state and ensure that we are poised to make needed investments when these roadways have been identified. Urban or rural, all Oregonians deserve safe roads that build stronger communities.





Communities know their own transportation needs best, and communities must be empowered to identify local solutions to these unsafe highways, including their maintenance and design, and transform them into community roadways that help all community members get where they need to go and access education, jobs, and the services they need. Our streets should reflect what our communities look like now, and this legislation will help facilitate that.

To ensure that all communities can benefit, in the future we will need to invest resources so that local communities are able to steward the roads that connect them. This bill is a critical step toward enabling safe community roadways that will help us thrive.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB 2744-1 to begin the process of creating safer communities throughout Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenny Lee", is written over the typed name.

Jenny Lee
Deputy Director
Coalition of Communities of Color

