



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Transportation

Director's Office

355 Capitol St. NE, MS 11

Salem, OR 97301

DATE: March 25, 2021

TO: Joint Committee on Transportation

FROM: Lindsay Baker, Assistant Director, Government and External Relations

SUBJECT: HB 2744(-1) – Jurisdictional Transfers

INTRODUCTION

House Bill 2744(-1) directs the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to conduct an evaluation of highways that are suitable candidates for jurisdictional transfer. The measure directs ODOT to identify and prioritize these corridors, and requires ODOT to report back to the Legislature by September 2022. The measure requires the analysis examine candidates in five named regions and notes that ODOT must collaborate with counties and cities. The measure requires ODOT use the November 2020 Metro Regional Framework on Highway Jurisdictional Transfer Study as part of the study. The measure stipulates that ODOT will study the cost estimates for improving standards prior to transfer, and identify resources to pay for those costs. Further, the measure establishes the Oregon Highway Jurisdictional Transfer Fund within the State Highway Fund.

DISCUSSION

House Bill 2744(-1) aims to identify highways that would benefit from a jurisdictional transfer in order to match the road use profile with the proper road authority. ODOT recognizes the importance of having road decisions made by the proper road authority; roads functioning as local roads should be governed and operated by a local jurisdiction, while interstates and other significant state corridors should be governed and operated by ODOT. During the 2017 session, the Legislature, through HB 2017, directed seven jurisdictional transfers. As of March 1, 2021, five of those jurisdictional transfers are now complete.

Jurisdictional transfers are conducted regularly between ODOT and local jurisdictions; in calendar years 2017 and 2018, seven corridors across the state were transferred to better match investment and management decisions with the proper road authority.

Jurisdictional transfers happen across the state every year, and most communities have an awareness of the corridors that should belong to another jurisdiction. For the majority of these transfers, a project or other immediate, planned action presented an opportunity for partnership to facilitate the transfer. Along with transfer of facility ownership, ODOT often provides funding or makes improvements for each corridor. As an example, a jurisdictional transfer from ODOT to the City of Hood River was finalized this winter as part of the Historic Columbia River Highway. No funds were exchanged to support this transfer; instead ODOT agreed to construct additional ADA curb ramps and pave an additional portion of the road.

ODOT recognizes the value in conducting a statewide study that looks at not only corridors that are good candidates for transfer but also the cost to improve each corridor. The initial work done in this evaluation will be high level due to time and financial constraints, but will still result in valuable planning information. HB 2744(-1) establishes a separate fund to support transfers, and directs identification of resources to pay for costs associated with a transfer. In addition to collaboration and partnership, sufficient funding is a critical component of successful jurisdictional transfers.

SUMMARY

House Bill 2744(-1) directs ODOT to conduct a thorough evaluation of highways suitable for jurisdictional transfer. ODOT welcomes the opportunity to engage in a high-level, statewide planning exercise to identify candidates for jurisdictional transfer and looks forward to further engaging with communities statewide on this effort.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any additional questions.