

**Oregon Legislature  
Joint Committee on Transportation  
Friday 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2024**

Dear Co-Chair Gorsek, Co-Chair McLain, and Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation, thank you for reading my testimony.

**My name is Dr Ben Harkin, and I am the husband of Karen Kain who was killed on SW Hall Boulevard on March 4th, 2022.**

How does one begin to describe the impact of having the person you love ripped away from you in a moment? How can you encapsulate that loss? Karen was an artist, a musician, a couple's counsellor, a foster carer, a friend, a daughter, a sister, an aunt, a partner, a wife. But none of these things even come close to describing all that she was to the hundreds of people around the world who are still reeling from her untimely death. Karen glowed, she brought light into any room she entered.

To give you further context for this tragedy, after living in Australia for 13 years of our marriage, Karen returned to the US in Dec 2020, to support her mother who was in dementia care. A typically selfless act from a woman who always put others first. Due to my work as a doctor and COVID restrictions, I was not able to travel to and from the US and so we would be apart for over a year. 4 weeks before I was due to arrive in the US to begin our new life in Portland together, Karen was killed. Killed as she crossed the road taking her mom in a wheelchair back to her memory care on SW Hall Boulevard. Our long-awaited reunion never happened.

**There is no doubt that lack of pedestrian infrastructure along this long-neglected road, was a significant factor in Karen's death. Indeed, since that time there has been a second person killed in a hit and run accident on SW Hall Boulevard, just a few hundred feet away from where Karen lost her life.**

When you consider your work on this 2025 transportation package, I would like you to keep Karen in your mind. Consider the avoidable loss of her life. A life that had so much more to give the community.

Consider, also, the next victims who may be killed on this dangerous stretch of road, the elderly person, the new mom pushing her baby in a stroller, the child crossing the busy road after the school bus drop off.

Since Karen's death, I and others have continued to advocate for, and follow the important work being done to make Hall Boulevard safer. Jurisdictional transfer of Hall Boulevard to the City of Tigard is the necessary next step that the legislature must take to ensure that this orphan highway reflects the needs of the community that has grown up around it. Not just road improvements, but importantly the necessary pedestrian infrastructure: improved lighting, continuous sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, ADA accessibility, to support all who will use it.

**In the next legislative session, you have the chance to help provide a safer neighborhood. I urge you to do so, so no one else has to experience the devastating loss that I have.**

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards,



Dr Ben Harkin MBBS MPH FRACP