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Direct PBOT and the BPS to form a task force to study and recommend both near- and long-term strategies for Pricing for Equitable Mobility

If you wish to speak to Council, please print your name, address and email

invited
~~not invited~~

invited

	Name (PRINT)	Address and Zip Code (Optional)	Email (Optional)
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2	Phil Richman	8811 SW 19th Ave	
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July 10th, 2019

Good afternoon Mayor Wheeler and members of the Portland City Council. My name is Jon Isaacs, and I am the Vice President of Government Affairs for the Portland Business Alliance. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

The Portland Business Alliance (PBA) is the Greater Portland Chamber of Commerce and the leading voice for business in the region. The Alliance takes direction from our members to advocate on their behalf at all levels of government to support commerce, community health and the shared and sustainable prosperity for our region and our State. On behalf of our 1900 members, I am here today to express our support for resolution 679, which directs the Portland Bureau of Transportation to create a task force dedicated to evaluating pricing strategies to reduce congestion.

I want to be clear, that our support is not an endorsement of pricing, but rather an agreement that PBOT must undergo an evaluation of pricing as a potential policy tool to help reduce congestion. And we do strongly endorse the approach of evaluating pricing in partnership with stakeholders.

It is clear that policy strategies and infrastructure investments to stem increased traffic congestion is a top priority of our region's residents and businesses. In January, PBA released the results of our annual survey to assess the policy values and priorities of Portland area likely voters. PBA has partnered with DHM Research to conduct and release this survey every year for the past decade as a service to the community in conjunction with our annual value of jobs economic check-up.

The clear take-a-way from the 2019 survey is that issues impacting our region's livability are far and away the top priority. Homelessness, the cost of housing, and increasing traffic congestion were the only issues that registered in the double digits. And while a majority of voters felt that the city and the region were on the right track, nearly two-thirds of voters said the region's livability is getting worse. In follow-up questions, nearly all survey respondents cited homelessness, housing or traffic congestion as the reason they felt livability was declining. This survey of the entire community aligns with the results of surveys we have conducted of PBA's approximately 1900 members.

Increasing congestion has a significant negative impact on our region's businesses, and while the overall economic health of our region is currently strong, we know that the economic and environmental impacts of congestion are a significant threat to the long term sustainability of our region's health. Congestion drives up the cost of shipping freight and goods, delivering projects on time and on budget, and impacts the competitiveness of our local retailers. And we all know too well the significant negative impact congestion has on the daily livability of our Portland area residents.

PBA and our members are ready to get to work to partner with the Mayor, Transportation Commissioner Eudaly, the entire council and PBOT to develop new innovative strategies to stem the tide of congestion for the long term health of our city and economy. Very recently, we have seen states and cities such as New York take important steps in overcoming historic political divides to adopt congestion management policies that include pricing. Research these policy and political breakthroughs and you will see that that one of the factors that led to success was the willingness of policy makers, community leaders, regulators, and the business community to collaborate to identify shared values, agree on the problem, and develop innovative solutions together. They further recognized that this is a problem that can only be solved through public private partnerships that leverage the benefits of innovation and technology developed by the private sector. The Portland Business Alliance and our members are ready to get to work to support and participate in a similarly collaborative process with the vision of tackling the congestion problem here in Portland.

Thank you.

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