

TRI-MET BOARD MEETING ON MARCH 25, 2009

Mr. Chair and Board of Directors, thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

I want to give to you a recap on the same information I brought before the Senate

Of Transportation Committee on Senate Bill 829, Tri-Met Safety Study. I will now

read to you what I read to them.

READ THE SPEECH

SB 829 REVIEW ON MARCH 5, 2009

(Senate Transportation Committee)

Mr. Chair, Members of the committee, thank you for inviting me here today to testify.

My name is Darla Sturdy and I have appeared before this committee in the past.

I want to give you a brief history of why I am here today.

I will Review the safety study report,

Uncover the discrepancies,

I am going to show you a snapshot of previous studies and their findings that are

10 years old

Tell you how to reduce accidents at Tri-Met, and

Give the framework for a Citizen Review board

My sons name is Aaron Wagner Sturdy. He was killed on June 23, 2003 when he was struck by the Light Rail Train. He was student body president; he was involved in the church, and in school he participated in football, baseball, drama, wrestling and was in the Junior Olympics, he placed 4th in the nation. An all around great son. After his accident I visited the Legislation and passed Senate Bill 829 requiring an independent pedestrian and bicyclist safety study throughout the entire Light Rail line. We wanted to prevent the general public from being injured and killed.

I went to a Tri-Met Board of Directors Meeting in April of 2008 to follow up on this law that was passed in June of 2007. Tri-Met was given 1 year to conduct this study. The Board of Directors knew nothing of the study. I then went back the next month and made them aware of all the circumstances surrounding my son's death and the Senate Bill requiring them to do the study.

Thank goodness for people like Lynn Lehrbach, who is on the board and he stood up and said "This is unacceptable", and I give him credit for getting the ball rolling. The study was completed and I was given a copy.

First, I found discrepancies in this recent study. I have seen other studies that were given to Tri-met and they have not moved on them in the past 10 years. Cal Trans Traffic Manual Section 10-04 states that barrier and channelization is required within a school zone. This came from a 2000 Tri-Met Pedestrian Control Warning and Decision Analysis by the Korve Engineers that Tri Met asked for. We have Center for Advanced Learning in Gresham, their front door is only 25 feet from the Max line and is unprotected.

500 Students attend this school and there is a law that states a SCHOOL ZONE IS DEFINED AS THE AREA WITHIN 600 FEET OF A SCHOOL BOUNDARY.

Tri-Met was told in 2000 to put a minimum of barriers and channelization and now we are told again in this study we need another study at this location.

We do not need another study, we need action. I submit to you both analyses, plus a letter from The Center from Advanced Learning and a picture of the school. I also included 2 more letters from Gresham High School and Alpha High School, which is in your packet. Also in your packet you will find a copy of a 1999 poll taken of Tri-Met operator's opinion as to the "Most Dangerous Tri-Met Stations". Center for Advanced Learning on Civic Way is one of those stations.

Secondly, when I went through this newest study, page 4 states, and I quote "During the 2007 Legislative session, Senate Bill 829 was adopted, which required a safety study of pedestrian crossings throughout the Tri-Met Light Rail system. This bill was prompted by a tragic accident at Gresham City Hall Station in 2003, ONE OF ONLY TWO BICYCLE FATALITIES IN TRI METS 22 YEAR HISTORY WITH LIGHT RAIL" This is in your packet.

When I first came to this Legislation Tri Met reported numbers that were very different. I submit to you again numbers that prove this statement in this study is also inaccurate.

The reason I am here is to tell you the information you are given does not paint the picture correctly. Yes there are only 2 bicyclist's fatalities in 22 years, they neglected to say that has been a total of 19 fatalities. In addition, there have been 505 accidents involving LRT during the last 12 years as of 2006. 103 accidents have involved pedestrians and bicyclists. The year my son died they hit 13 pedestrians and 2 bicyclists. If you take the 505 accidents and divide by 12 years this will show the Light Rail System has hit on average of 3 a month. The report I refer to is Tri-Mets LRT report through 1994-2006. This is in your packet.

To be told only 2 fatalities is not only inaccurate it is Appalling.

Furthermore, these 19 fatalities all share one thing in common. It is never Tri-Mets Fault, and it is absolutely contrary to the National Transportation Safety Board procedures and to the Tri Met procedures in their training manuals.

I have had Safety Experts look at Tri Mets accidents and how they judge them. They will paint a completely different picture than what is being submitted to you to review. There are standard safety practices that are recognized in all forms of transportation, therefore I would like a work session to bring in my experts to develop and show this committee the larger problem that exists and also provide you with an accurate assessment of these 2 issues, one of inaccurate numbers and 2 the improper use of the standard safety practices.

The basics of accident preventions are not being followed. This can be done at no cost to Tri Met. We can prevent accidents if they just followed the basic 5 seeing habits and we hold the drivers and Tri-met accountable to the National Transportation Board Standards.

It is in Tri Mets political best interests to say it is someone else's fault. This does not excuse them from practicing safety procedures.

I would like to start the preliminary steps to form a Private Citizen Safety Review Board of all Tri-Met accidents, so this Transportation Committee will see the true picture.

In conclusion:

I lost my son; we passed a law for a study. Tri-Mets board members didn't know about Senate Bill 829. Lynn Lehrback got the ball rolling.

The study is inaccurate, and talks of further wasted time and more studies.

We have submitted previous studies with no action in 10 years.

Please require Tri Met to put barriers up to make it safer for those 500 students at Center for Advanced Learning in Gresham. Please help by setting up a work session and let us produce accurate assessments of the true Tri-Met Safety Numbers and Accident procedures, to eliminate others from being hurt and or killed. We would also like you to start preliminary steps to form a Private Citizen Safety Review Board of all Tri-Met Accidents.

I remarked earlier in my speech about how it is in Tri Mets best political interest to say, that it is someone's fault. I believe that my son would have said, that it is in everyone's best interest, politically and otherwise to be held Accountable. The loss of any human life to violent means is Appalling. The picture on front of your packet is Aaron's 16th birthday. Aaron's birthday is this next Friday, March 13 and he will be 22 years old.

May God be with all of you as you look at this and make a decision. My son had a saying "Dream Big;" don't let the little things get in your way. To me that means its ok Mom, you can't save me but you can save someone else.

AARON'S BRIDGE TO SAFETY THAT'S WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT. I WOULDN'T BE HERE TODAY IF I HADN'T LOST MY SON AARON TO MAKE IT SAFE FOR YOUR CHILDREN, YOUR GRANDCHILDREN, AND REALLY ANYONE YOU KNOW.

IT'S YOUR DECISION----"WHAT IS A LIFE WORTH?"

Now you know why I am here. When I testified in front of the Senate on March 5, 2009 I was told by Senator Rick Metzger to come back to the Board of Directors to help you the Board to Initiate a Private Citizen Safety Review Board.

I AM ASKING YOU TO DO JUST THAT.

Tri-Met was told 10 years ago to put swing gates or channelization in front of a school, which has not been done yet. This does not establish the Safety First Attitude expressed by Fred Hansen on March 5th.

I was here 1 year ago and you didn't know about SB-829, That is absolutely wrong. I shouldn't have been the one to bring this to you, Tri-Met should have. The analysis given to you was inaccurate and the safety picture at Tri-Met is also distorted as shown to me by the safety experts. You need to see Tri-Met Safety in an Honest and factual basis, Not a political view. The system is broken and I want to help fix it.

Thank you again for your time.