



Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

"The sportsmen's voice for our wild public lands, waters and wildlife"

www.backcountryhunters.org

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Chairman Witt and members of the Committee:

The Oregon Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 2834 "The Wildlife Corridor and Safe Road Crossing Act".

Founded in 2004 around an Oregon campfire, Backcountry Hunters & Angler's leads the nation as a public lands advocacy organization. We represent sportsmen and women from all 50 states and 3 Canadian provinces to ensure that public land policies reflect the values of North America's hunters and anglers. Since our founding our membership has grown to eclipse 25,000 members.

Spanning our lush coastal rainforest to the craggy breaks of Hells Canyon, our state has robust populations of big game species. With recent advances in GPS, SAT and VHF collar technology, wildlife biologists are now learning at a very detailed scale the extent of where these big game animals are migrating every year between summer and winter habitats. It is imperative that this new data is used to inform policy decisions that protect critical big game habitat.

The bill before you, HB 2834, will take steps in this direction and create a framework in which science and new GPS collar data can increasingly inform the state's decisions related to both habitat conservation and transportation infrastructure.

The timing of this legislation could not be better. At the Federal level, last year, the Secretary of Interior issued order 3362, "Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big-Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors." The order directs DOI agencies, such as the Bureau of Land Management, to work in collaboration with western states to identify and conserve migration corridors and other crucial habitat. This state and federal collaboration is well under way and HB 2834 would be an additional tool to add to this momentum.

Specifically, this bill directs ODFW and ODOT to work together to develop a "Wildlife Corridor and Safe Road Crossing Action Plan" to provide guidance to state agencies toward designating and protecting wildlife corridors. We feel this is an issue that Oregon can continue to lead by example. In 2012, the first two wildlife crossing structures were installed under Highway 97 in Central Oregon. These crossings have been a huge success. Wildlife-vehicle collisions have been reduced by 85% and more than 30 species use these underpasses to safely move across the landscape. This is one

example that could be a model for further prevention of the 1200-1500 car vs. animal collisions yearly statewide.

Wildlife crossings are safe, proven, and cost effective. They keep motorists safe and allow for wildlife to migrate, uninhibited by roads and traffic. Our Oregon Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers supports HB 2834. We appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony today and welcome any questions you may have. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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