

HB 2548 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Agriculture and Natural Resources

Prepared By: Stuty Maskey, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 2/2, 3/30

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs the Legislative Policy and Research Office (LPRO) to study, as a supplement to and in conjunction with the Wildlife Corridor Action Plan, issues related to funding wildlife corridor road crossings. Requires that the study at a minimum examine the potential logistics and benefits of imposing a fee or surcharge on motor vehicle liability insurance policies to fund construction of wildlife corridor road crossings; an estimate of the numbers and types of wildlife corridor road crossings that would be necessary to significantly reduce collisions between motor vehicles and wildlife; an estimate of the moneys that a fee or surcharge of differing amounts could yield for a wildlife corridor road crossing construction program and the number of wildlife corridor road crossing construction projects that the program could potentially fund each year with different fees or surcharges; and an estimate of the reductions in property damage, health care costs, insurance premiums, and other impacts that constructing an adequate number of wildlife corridor road crossings in appropriate locations could produce, along with an analysis of the benefits compared with the impact of the costs to motor vehicle liability insurance policy holders. Directs the Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services to support and cooperate with the LPRO in researching and preparing the report. Requires LPRO to present the results of the study in a report to an appropriate committee of the Legislative Assembly by September 15, 2022. Sunsets bill provisions on January 2, 2023.

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued.

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

A wildlife corridor is a path that animals and plants use to travel between habitats. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) maintains a wildlife collisions location database which illustrates where these collisions are concentrated. In 2012, ODOT constructed a wildlife crossing under Highway 97. In 2014, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) reported an 80 percent decrease in deer mortality along the affected stretch of highway. States such as California, New Hampshire, and New Mexico have passed bills requiring or encouraging state agencies to mitigate for vehicle-wildlife collisions and conserve wildlife corridors. In Oregon, the Wildlife Corridor Action Plan was enacted into law in 2020, and provides guidance for all state agencies to develop benchmarks for the designation and protection of wildlife corridors.

House Bill 2548 would require the Legislative Policy and Research Office to study, as a supplement to and in conjunction with the Wildlife Corridor Action Plan, issues related to funding wildlife corridor road crossings, and to present the results of the study in a report to an appropriate committee of the Legislative Assembly by September 15, 2022.