



February 7, 2023

Attention: Rep. Helm, Chair
House Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water Committee

RE: HB 2999 Wildlife Crossing Planning and Construction

Chair Helm and Committee Members:

The Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) represents Oregon's 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), special districts governed by elected boards. The Districts protect and enhance soil quality, water quality and quantity, and habitat by supporting voluntary conservation in partnership with private landowners and managers as well as federal, state, and nonprofit partners, providing technical support and assistance in seeking project funding.

Wildlife crossings have shown reduction in wildlife collisions with vehicles at a rate of 90%. The recent Washington State University study has calculated a savings of \$235,000-\$443,000 annually from substantial damage to vehicles and occupants.

The Oregon Department of Transportation has the ability to partner with state and federal agencies to provide our citizens and our wildlife the necessary protections if we can plan and implement construction of wildlife crossings. The funding provided by this bill will provide a state cost share to other programs.

When successfully implemented, crossing can greatly reduce the likelihood of collisions, provide a safe corridor for animal transit and help reduce the ecological impact of highways by reconnecting animal habitats. We strongly urge enacting HB 2999 in this session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jan Lee".

Jan Lee, Executive Director
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