



Volunteer

Testimony Before Oregon House Committee
On
Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water

February 9, 2023

Subject: HB 2999 – Modifies ODOT wildlife-vehicle collision program. Directs ODFW carry out projects to support species mobility and habitat connectivity and provides \$5 million in General Funds

Chair Helm and members of the Committee

My name is David Wiley. I live in Sublimity, Oregon. I am a member of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) and a Lead Volunteer for the Elk Foundation in Oregon. Today I am speaking to you on behalf of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

The RMEF is a national non-profit hunter sponsored conservation organization whose mission is to ensure the future of elk, other wildlife, their habitat, and our hunting heritage. We represent more than 225,000 members nationwide and more than 14,000 in Oregon. Since 1991 within Oregon, RMEF and its partners have completed more than 1,034 conservation and hunting heritage projects in the state, enhancing over 865,647 acres and improved recreational access to 139,655 acres.

RMEF strongly recommends HB 2999 for this Committee’s full and unqualified support, approval, and passage to the full House with a do-pass recommendation.

Wildlife collisions with cars and trucks on Oregon’s roadways are:

1. a **public safety** concern due to human injuries,
2. an **economic** issue because of medical treatment costs and the vehicle and property damage costs, and
3. have **ecological** impacts upon wildlife thru death or injury of the animals struck and the barrier the roadways present to wildlife movement locally and where deer, elk and pronghorn migration routes intersect major roadways.

Oregonians love their wildlife. There is broad support for constructing more wildlife crossings under and over our highways and byways.

Wildlife underpasses are effective. On Highway 97, south of Bend, a wildlife underpass has reduce wildlife vehicle collisions with deer by 90%.

ODOT has begun a program which incorporates building wildlife crossings into its highway improvements at locations where ODFW indicates they are needed. Oregon now



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has three or four on the ground and more on the drawing board. However, Oregon is a long way behind Colorado's 65 wildlife crossings, Utah's 50, or Nevada's 23.

The funding in this bill along funding provided last legislative session will put Oregon in a very strong position to compete for Federal grants from the \$350 million Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program.

HB2999 is a Win-Win for Oregon motorists and Oregon Wildlife.

Please give HB2999 your stamp of approval.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Are there any questions?