

Submitter: Suzanne Linford
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

I am Suzanne Linford, the Executive Director of Protect Animal Migration, an educational non profit providing fact based information on wildlife to the general public.

Please consider supporting HB 2999 which would award \$5 million for habitat connectivity. What does this mean and why is it important ? Many species need to move across the landscape from one fragmented habitat to another. For Mule Deer, this is essential for their survival. They can only digest foods found in specific ranges during specific seasons. Although they can lose their ability (and knowledge) of migration and become stranded in our neighborhoods and yards, they will not thrive. There are other tangible needs for connecting habitats that have been ably stated by others' testimonies. The intangible reasons are taken for granted. As someone who has talked to the general public for over eight years on this subject, I hear over and over again, how wildlife and especially mule deer are valued. Rural landowners have a connection to wildlife and habitat that few of us who live in urban settings can. They often lament the disappearance of deer in places that they used to see them. Urban visitors to central Oregon often come to see wildlife and to be restored by the open spaces and native species that remain here. We cannot live without the intangible benefits of the natural world, yet they are often valued less than other projects. According to the North American Conservation Plan we "own" wildlife, yet we are remiss in providing them with the landscape they need to survive. . Please support HB 2999. Thank you for your consideration and for your service.