

## HB 2978 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

### House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

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**Sub-Referral To:** Joint Committee On Ways and Means

**Meeting Dates:** 2/5

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#### WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure modifies the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) wildlife-vehicle collision program (program), instructs ODOT and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to establish an advisory group for the program, and makes changes to ODOT's reporting requirements. The measure also requires ODFW to, subject to available funding, carry out projects to support wildlife mobility and habitat connectivity within certain priority areas, and in doing so consider opportunities to secure competitive federal grants and other matching funds.

#### Detailed Summary

##### Modifications to the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) wildlife-vehicle collision program (program)

- Adds the following program requirements: (1) feasibility studies; (2) updates to wildlife guidance materials and standards, highway specifications, construction and modifications; (3) a training program for ODOT employees and other stakeholders on infrastructure-wildlife interactions, established in coordination with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and (4) a list of priority projects to reduce vehicle-wildlife collisions that is published on ODOT's website and developed in consultation with ODFW, with opportunity for public input.
- Requires ODOT, in consultation with ODFW to consider, and to the extent feasible, plan for and incorporate measures and infrastructure to promote the protection of wildlife corridor connectivity from the impacts of transportation infrastructure in Oregon.
- Requires program projects that impact threatened or endangered species, or species of greatest conservation as identified by ODFW, to include impact mitigation and crossing infrastructure, to the greatest extent feasible.

##### Establishment of a program advisory group

- Directs ODOT and ODFW to establish a program advisory group through a joint memorandum of understanding (MOU) for collaboration, capacity and community outreach coordination, science sharing, and assistance with the identification of priority areas and priority projects.
- Authorizes the MOU to designate a willing nongovernmental entity to serve as a neutral facilitator of the advisory group.
- Specifies advisory group membership and meeting requirements and directs ODOT to publish advisory group meeting materials and recommendations on the department's website.
- Sunsets the advisory group on January 2, 2035.

##### Modifications to ODOT's program reporting requirements

*Adds description of the following aspects to the content requirements of ODOT's biennial report:*

- Implementation timeline, cost estimate, and funding sources for proposed and prioritized wildlife corridor infrastructure projects;
- Actions ODOT has taken to secure program funding and a strategy for ongoing program funding

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*This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.*

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- Efforts and successes of the newly established advisory group including moneys directed to programs through public-private funding partnerships, community and stakeholder engagement, and addressing of priority areas.

### Wildlife mobility and habitat connectivity

- Requires ODFW to, subject to available funding, carry out projects to support wildlife mobility and habitat connectivity within priority areas identified in the Oregon Connectivity Assessment and Mapping Project, and in doing so consider opportunities to secure competitive federal grants and other matching funds.

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

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

### **ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

#### **EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:**

-1 The amendment modifies the involvement of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and sunsets the reporting requirements related to the program advisory group on January 2, 2035.

#### Detailed Analysis

- Specifies that the list of priority projects to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions is developed **jointly**, rather than in consultation, with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).
- Specifies that the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) must work **in coordination**, rather than in consultation, with ODFW on efforts to reduce impacts of transportation infrastructure on wildlife corridor connectivity.
- Sunsets ODOTS's reporting requirement related to the program advisory group on January 2, 2035.

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

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

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Wildlife corridors are man-made infrastructures managed by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) that provide safe passage for animals forced to navigate ecosystems fragmented by roads. Their intention is to help animal migration during breeding season migration to other feeding grounds and reduce the chances of wildlife-vehicle collisions. The first wildlife corridor in Oregon was built in 2012. In 2019, [House Bill 2834](#) lead to the development of a Wildlife Corridor Action Plan under the direction of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). Since then, several other wildlife corridor projects have been completed and research to determine best practices on location selection is ongoing.