

Submitter: Lace Thornberg

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2978

Dear Co-Chair Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair McDonald, and Members of the Committee:

One evening, as my neice and I were driving back to our home in Bend on Highway 97, our lives flashed before our eyes as we hit a mule deer thta had bounded across the road. In that moment, we'd killed one of my favorite animals and totaled my trusty Rav 4. Sadly, this was totally preventable. Since that fateful night, new wildlife crossing structures have been put in place in that same stretch of highway which have greatly reduced the number of wildlife-vehicles collisions in that area. As someone who has experienced how scary and how costly a collision is, I urge you to prioritize more funding and support for wildlife crossings across Oregon, particularly in Central Oregon where the need is so high.

Wildlife crossings are a highly effective tool that Oregon needs in more places. HB 2978 and an option for permanent state-level funding to support wildlife crossing initiatives will:

- * Improve the safety of Oregon's roadways
- * Make Oregon more competitive in capturing federal funding
- * Remove barriers that prevent animals from finding food, shelter, and mates

I strongly support HB 2978! Thank you for your time hearing this bill and reading this comment. I hope you will build on the important progress that has been made by the state legislature in recent years and take this opportunity to prioritize public safety and restore wildlife habitat connectivity.

Sincerely,
Lace Thornberg