

Submitter: David Gutt

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:

Please build on the important progress at the state legislature in recent years by passing HB 2978.

My spouse and I are retired residents of Bend. We spend many hundreds of hours and thousands of miles regularly commuting to the Sisters and Metolius areas as volunteers with the Deschutes Land Trust. Over the years we have had numerous sightings and several near misses with deer and elk along this corridor. Early summer 2022 we witnessed a severe multiple vehicular collision involving a herd of elk. This occurred south of Fryear Rd along hiway 20. Aside from the brutal carnage, pickup trucks were rolled, glass and debris covered both lanes, and the horrific loss of life to the elk, some of which no doubt needed to be euthanized, was an unsettling event. Humans were also injured. Traffic was snarled and backed up for well over an hour. This unfortunate collision should have made anyone seeing it wonder what could be does to reduce the risk of recurrence. Now you have the opportunity. Please pass HB 2978.

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 and I hope you will seize this opportunity to prioritize public safety and restore wildlife habitat connectivity.

Sincerely,
David Gutt
Bend