

Submitter: Nicholas Rasmussen
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.

As a Central Oregon resident I am concerned with how we can protect wildlife and natural habitats here in our community. Habitat fragmentation and degradation are stressing local animals and the added danger of crossing busy roads puts many at risk. I have witnessed such an accident on Hwy 20 just coming in to Bend and have seen the result of many others. I sincerely feel that our efforts to protect wildlife and their habitats will be an essential component of a healthy Central Oregon. We are in times of political divisiveness and environmental catastrophe; but if we set aside all our differences, don't we all have some aspect of nature that we love and isn't that worth protecting? The extent of flourishing wildlife communities brings more than healthy ecosystems, it brings healthy people.

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 act on this opportunity to prioritize public safety and restore wildlife habitat connectivity.

Sincerely,
Nicholas Rasmussen