

Submitter: Malcolm Costello

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2978

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

I strongly support HB 2978. Though now living in Bend, for many years we lived in Portland and co-owned a property in Sunriver, and at least once a month made the trip through Detroit and over Santiam Pass and on through Sisters. Leaving Portland or Sunriver late afternoon we would frequently be travelling the stretch from Sisters to Suttle Lake in the twilight hours, and over the years had plenty of wildlife encounters ranging from seeing dead deer at the side of the road, to glimpsing the sudden movement of an animal darting across the highway in the glooming, to the frustration of a long delay caused by a bad encounter between a vehicle and wildlife, that now impacted many peoples journey. The problem got worse over time, while by contrast the "underpasses" created for wildlife under Hwy 97 south of Lava Butte clearly significantly reduced the encounters between there and Sunriver.

I am reminded that these negative outcomes - crashed cars, slaughtered animals, personal injuries, and road blockages - occur not because a deer is crossing the road, but because a road is crossing a forest. It is up to us to build safe crossing structures for animal passage, where we have driven our highways through the forest.

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

- Improve the safety of Oregon's roadways
- Remove barriers to wildlife
- Make Oregon more competitive in capturing federal funding

Please build on the important progress at the state legislature over the past five years by passing HB 2978.