

Submitter: Jennifer Finley

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.

I live in Bend, Oregon. I cherish Central Oregon's wildlife. I love all of its creatures, especially mule deer as I know they have a difficult time crossing our busy roads and highways. I often see confused and frightened mule deer attempting to cross busy streets like Greenwood, Wilson, Bond St, Franklin St. Just last June, a year old mule deer was struck by a car trying to cross Franklin St from a adjacent neighborhood into Drake Park. Traffic stopped. Two women were at the deer's side. Blood was pooling at the young deer's head. It was a tragic loss of life. The deer only needed a safe way to cross the street. Perhaps the driver that struck the deer with his/her car didn't see the deer as they blend in so well with their environment. Perhaps they were speeding and driving recklessly. Perhaps they were just not paying attention carefully enough. Regardless, this deer could have crossed the road safely with a wildlife crossing. I think of this deer a lot. Every time I drive that curve on Franklin Street as I head home. It's heartbreaking. Deer are smart. They choose the safer paths. They would choose a safer crossing were one available. But, there are none around. I think there is a wildlife crossing towards Sunriver, but I don't think I've ever seen it. They should be all over Central Oregon because we value and cherish all of our wildlife.

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,

Jennifer Finley