

Submitter: Lauren Hobson

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'm writing to you today because I strongly support HB 2978. Seriously! Wildlife crossings are such a good thing.

In addition to my firm belief that humans have an ethical imperative to reduce our impact on nature whenever possible and practical, this bill also provides an important safety precaution for people. Wildlife crossings are mutually beneficial: they help the extraordinary animals we live alongside stay safer from cars, and they reduce the risk of people getting into unnecessary car accidents. Some of the scariest driving experiences of my life have come from near-collisions with animals. Once, in my early twenties, I swerved off a road, into a ditch, because of a near-miss with an owl (I was panicked and jerked the wheel when something came flying at my windshield). My dad had to come get me, driving an hour and a half, because I was so rattled. When I was driving home from the coast, I almost hit a coyote -- I screamed and closed my eyes as the coyote dashed across the road, endangering both me, my passenger, and all the other drivers on the road. Was that a terrible response to fear? Of course! But I'm only human, and that's how I reacted (not unlike many people would, might I add). Roadkill is also just really sad. Maybe that's not enough of a reason for you as politicians, but I say a little prayer when I pass a raccoon or deer. Don't they deserve the ability to cross safely? I got engaged last year at Suttle Lake, and on the way home from a really special weekend, we passed two ducks on the side of the highway. The female was dead, but the drake was still sitting by her side, as if she might wake up. I mean, come on. Gut-wrenching!

So please, let's just have the easy, lovely win of wildlife crossings. I can't figure out who the lobby is on the other side of this issue, or maybe it's just a funding thing, but in a world that grows increasingly terrifying and grim, maybe we can have less roadkill in our (for now) beautiful state. Doesn't that sound like a nice thing? Can we please have one nice thing?

Wildlife crossings are highly effective and Oregon needs more crossing structures! Washington (!!!) is putting us to shame. 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, from the bottom of this constituent's heart, let's build on the important progress at the state legislature over the past five years by passing HB 2978. Come on! You can do it!

With hope,
Lauren Hobson