



Co Chairs Rep Helm and Rep Owens, Vice Chair: Rep Finger McDonald, and Members of the of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

My name is Joe Liebezeit. I'm the Director of Statewide Conservation for the Bird Alliance of Oregon. Our mission is to "Inspire all people to love and protect birds, wildlife, and the natural environment upon which life depends." At 122 years old, we are the longest serving conservation organization in Oregon. On behalf of our over 12,000 members, we are writing today to urge you to please support passage of HB 2978 - "Wildlife Crossings Bill".

Every year there are over 7,000 wildlife vehicle collisions in Oregon. These collisions result in injuries to hundreds of people every year and, in some cases, fatalities. Most of these incidents are deer-vehicle collisions which results in over \$100 million per year in damages. These problems will only intensify as the population of Oregon increases.

Passing HB 2978 would help ameliorate this growing problem and improve Oregon's wildlife /habitat connectivity law by requiring :

1. Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to update its wildlife guidance materials, standardize and highway specifications to incorporate wildlife crossing design considerations
2. An MOU between ODOT and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife that would enable broader collaboration between and resource sharing among agencies, Tribes, NGOs and other relevant partners
3. Create a training program to educate ODOT staff and other on transportation solutions for wildlife and human safety
4. ODOT coordinate with ODFW to avoid and minimize impacts to wildlife connectivity from construction, operation and maintenance of infrastructure on our roadways across the state.

Wildlife crossings work! Existing crossings on US 97 in southern Oregon have reduced deer collisions >90%. Oregonians support this work too. Over 85% of Oregon voters want the state to build more wildlife crossing and 75% support increased funding to build crossings. Please support HB 2978!

Joe Liebezeit

Director Statewide Conservation
Bird Alliance of Oregon