



COALITION OF OREGON LAND TRUSTS

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February 4th, 2025

To: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

From: The Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

RE: Support for H.B. 2978

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

On behalf of the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT), I would like to share our support for H.B. 2978, a bill to improve Oregon's existing wildlife connectivity law and mitigate impacts to wildlife from transportation infrastructure.

COLT is a membership organization representing 31 land trusts, soil and water conservation districts, and conservation organizations working across Oregon to protect our habitat and natural spaces – for all people, forever. Collectively, our members have protected more than 318,000 acres of land across our state.

H.B. 2978 would improve Oregon's existing connectivity law by requiring the Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to update their wildlife guidance materials, standards, and highway specifications to incorporate wildlife crossing design considerations. It would also require ODOT to consult with ODFW in order to minimize, avoid, and mitigate impacts to wildlife connectivity from the construction and maintenance of transportation infrastructure across our state.

COLT's member land trusts already work in support of wildlife in Oregon by conserving lands to prevent fragmentation and facilitate wildlife movement, but our land trusts are also engaged in direct work to build new wildlife crossings in their regions.



24 MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS: Blue Mountain Land Trust • Center for Natural Lands Management • Columbia Land Trust
Deschutes Land Trust • Ducks Unlimited • Forest Park Conservancy • Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust
Greenbelt Land Trust • Klamath Lake Land Trust • Lower Nehalem Community Trust • McKenzie River Trust
North Coast Land Conservancy • Northwest Rangeland Trust • Oregon Agricultural Trust • Oregon Desert Land Trust
Pacific Forest Trust • Southern Oregon Land Conservancy • The Conservation Fund • The Nature Conservancy in Oregon
The Trust for Public Land • The Wetlands Conservancy • Willowa Land Trust • Western Rivers Conservancy • Wild Rivers Land Trust
8 ASSOCIATE MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS: Black Oregon Land Trust • Cerro Gordo Land Conservancy • Clackamas Soil & Water
Conservation District • East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District • Helvetia Community Association
Tualatin Soil & Water Conservation District • View the Future • Yamhill Soil & Water Conservation District

The Southern Oregon Land Conservancy is one of the 17 members of the Southern Oregon Wildlife Crossing Coalition, which is a partnership group focused on improving wildlife movement and motorist safety in the Siskiyou Summit region of I-5 by creating a network of wildlife crossings. The Deschutes Land Trust has teamed up with a coalition of local organizations, agencies, and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs to help build a new wildlife crossing on Highway 20 to help animals cross safely while reducing danger for people on Highway 20. Out in Eastern Oregon, the Wallowa Land Trust is working in partnership with Defenders of Wildlife on project planning and landowner outreach for a future wildlife crossing in their region.

H.B. 2978 will help reduce wildlife vehicle collisions, improve interagency coordination, and update standards to improve wildlife crossing design. We urge the Committee to support H.B. 2978.

Sincerely,



Joe Buttafuoco
Executive Director
Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

