

Testimony in Support of HB 2978

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

Oregon State Capitol

900 Court St. NE

Salem, OR 97301

Chair Helm, Vice Chair Ownes, and Members of the Committee:

My name is **Tristan Henry** and I serve as the Oregon Field Representative for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (the TRCP). On behalf of our members across Oregon, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in strong support of **HB 2978**. This bill will improve habitat connectivity and reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions, ensuring safe passage for both people and wildlife.

About the TRCP

The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership is a nonprofit organization dedicated to guaranteeing all Americans quality places to hunt and fish. We work closely with hunters, anglers, Tribes, local communities, and other stakeholders to conserve Oregon's natural heritage—including the critical habitats, migration corridors, and winter ranges that our wildlife depend upon.

Why HB 2978 Is Crucial for Oregon's Wildlife

1. Protecting Migration Corridors and Winter Range

- Roads, highways, and human development fragment essential corridors and wintering grounds, disrupting seasonal movements and access to forage or calving grounds.
- HB 2978 ensures that the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) collaborate to identify and mitigate risks in priority areas—particularly for species of greatest conservation need that rely on intact migration routes and secure winter range.

2. Addressing the Mounting Costs of Habitat Fragmentation

- Fragmentation reduces habitat quality, forces wildlife into smaller and more isolated pockets, and increases the likelihood of collisions, especially for migrating elk, deer, pronghorn, and other iconic species.
- By requiring ODOT to incorporate wildlife corridor infrastructure—such as overpasses, underpasses, and strategic fencing—HB 2978 will help reconnect critical habitats while keeping motorists safe.

3. Leveraging Federal and State Resources

- With 15 new or expanded federal grant opportunities currently available for wildlife corridor conservation, HB 2978 gives Oregon the policy direction it needs to secure matching funds and accelerate project implementation.
- Investing in wildlife connectivity yields substantial returns for our outdoor recreation economy, reducing costly collisions, supporting healthy game populations, and maintaining world-class hunting and fishing opportunities.

4. Collaborative, Science-Based Solutions

- HB 2978 directs ODOT and ODFW to update design standards, provide staff training, and develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that engages Tribes, conservation groups, academic experts, and other partners.
 - This synergy allows Oregon to capitalize on proven best practices and ensure wildlife migrations, corridors, and winter range remain viable for future generations.

The Impact on Hunters, Anglers, and All Oregonians

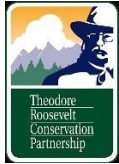
- **Robust Fish and Wildlife Populations:** Protecting key seasonal habitats and migratory pathways helps sustain healthy herds, benefiting everyone who values Oregon’s iconic wildlife.
- **Safe Roads for People and Wildlife:** Reducing collisions not only saves human lives and property damage costs, but also supports stronger wildlife populations by minimizing vehicle strikes.
- **Strong Outdoor Economy:** Oregon’s hunters, anglers, and wildlife watchers contribute billions of dollars to our state’s economy each year. Maintaining well-connected habitats keeps our landscapes resilient, ensures abundant wildlife, and supports sustainable outdoor recreation.

On behalf of the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, I respectfully urge your support for HB 2978. This bill is a forward-looking, science-based solution that addresses some of the most

pressing challenges facing Oregon's wildlife—habitat fragmentation, corridor disruptions, and winter range loss—while making our roads safer for everyone.

Thank you for your consideration, and I appreciate your commitment to safeguarding Oregon's wildlife and natural heritage.

Sincerely,



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