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February 4, 2025

Representative Helm, Chair
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Oregon Legislature

Re: Environment Oregon supports House Bill 2978

Chair Helm, Vice-Chairs Hartman and Owens, and Members of the Committee,

Environment Oregon is a policy and action group with one mission: to restore and protect the natural world. Our staff works for clean air, clean water, clean energy, wildlife, open spaces and a livable climate. Our members across the state put grassroots support behind our research and advocacy. We are writing in support of House Bill 2978, a vital step toward reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions and preserving Oregon's rich biodiversity.

Nature thrives when it's connected—but across Oregon roads, fences, and development have carved up wild spaces, disrupting the movement of animals and fracturing entire ecosystems.

When habitats are fragmented, wildlife struggles. Migration routes are severed, genetic diversity declines, and species face greater risks from disease, wildfires and climate change. Animals forced to cross busy highways often pay the ultimate price. Each year, Oregon sees more than 6,000 reported collisions with deer and elk alone—endangering wildlife, drivers and the balance of our ecosystems.

Wildlife corridors are a proven solution. By reconnecting habitats, these projects help animals access food, water, shelter and mates safely. Wildlife crossings — overpasses and underpasses that let animals move freely—are one proven tool. Take the Lava Butte underpass: after just one year, deer-vehicle collisions in the area dropped by more than 90%.

Oregon has made strides in investing in wildlife crossings, but we need to do more. That's why we urge the passage of House Bill 2978, which would expand Oregon's wildlife-vehicle collision program for projects across the state. These crossings will protect wildlife, make our roads safer, and restore the natural connections that keep our ecosystems healthy.

Let's make Oregon a leader in smart conservation. We appreciate the opportunity to share our support for HB 2978 and look forward to working together to build a future where people and wildlife can move safely through our shared landscapes.

Sincerely,

Justin Boyles
Conservation Advocate,
Environment Oregon