



Testimony in Support of HB 3362 to the Oregon Legislature's Joint Committee on Transportation

Submitted by the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center (KS Wild), Ashland, Oregon

March 4, 2025

Good evening Chair Gorsek, Chair McLain, co-chairs and members of the committee,

Hello, my name is Frances Oyung, and I am the Rogue Riverkeeper Program Manager of the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center (KS Wild) based in Ashland Oregon. KS Wild advocates for the wildlands and biodiversity of southwest Oregon and northwest California. KS Wild is also a member of the Southern Oregon Wildlife Crossing Coalition, a broad-based partnership advocating for improved wildlife movement and increased safety for motorists in the Siskiyou Summit region of I-5 between Ashland and the California border. KS Wild represents approximately 10,000 members and supporters across Oregon and beyond. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 3362, crucial legislation that would provide funding to address tire pollution prevention and mitigation, wildlife-vehicle collision reduction, and wildlife crossings in Oregon.

The Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion is one of the most biodiverse areas in the world, home to a range of species found nowhere else. Wildlife crossings are now used throughout the US to help maintain genetic diversity and promote healthy ecosystems by providing safe passage for animals across highways. They also reduce roadkill, which disproportionately impacts species at risk of extinction. In Southern Oregon, roads and highways sever critical wildlife corridors that many species rely on for migration, breeding, and foraging. The Klamath-Siskiyou region is particularly vulnerable, as it contains important migratory corridors for wildlife like black bears, elk, and the Pacific

fisher. KS Wild has been working with partners for several years to develop and fund a wildlife crossing on I-5 near Siskiyou Summit. Supporting HB 3362 will provide funds to take action to allow wildlife to move safely between habitats, increasing their chances of survival in the face of growing human encroachment and climate-related changes, as well as improve highway safety and reduce injury and costs from animal/vehicle collisions.

Another key issue in our region is the impact of vehicle-related pollutants, particularly the tire chemical 6PPD-quinone, which enters waterways primarily from stormwater runoff from roads. 6PPD-quinone is now known to be especially lethal to coho salmon as well as other aquatic species and the impacts of this pollutant have only recently been fully understood. Coho salmon are a federally listed species under the Endangered Species Act and are integral to Rogue ecosystems. The OR Department of Fish & Wildlife has now identified coho populations in parts of the Rogue as at “medium” risk from 6PPD-quinone so this is a pollutant that now needs to be addressed in our region if we seek to conserve coho and other aquatic species.

Fortunately, 6PPD-quinone (6PPD-q) can be effectively removed from stormwater by treating it in a variety of ways. Simple and proven techniques such as bioretention, porous pavement, and proprietary filters have been shown to reduce 6PPD-q up to 90% but as the impacts of this pollutant have only recently been understood, current infrastructure does not sufficiently protect waterways from 6PPD-q. Funds from this tax could be used to retrofit and otherwise implement these now proven methods to remove 6PPD-q and other pollutants from waterways while industry seeks to find safer replacement ingredients for tires.

In conclusion, KS Wild and Rogue Riverkeeper strongly endorse HB 3362 because it would make economic sense and a tangible difference in protecting biodiversity and water quality in our region. We urge you to support HB 3362 and allow us to fund a future in the Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion complete with diverse fish and wildlife, safe highways, and clean rivers and streams. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Frances Oyung
Rogue Riverkeeper Program Manager
Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center (KS Wild)