

Submitter: Benton Elliott  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

I write in support of providing significant funding in the Oregon budget for wildlife crossings. In your deliberations, please consider the following. Wildlife-vehicle collisions pose a serious safety and economic threat to Oregonians. According to the Oregon Department of Transportation, each year there are over 7,000 wildlife-vehicle collisions in the state, resulting in human injury and fatalities and significantly effecting migrating populations of wildlife while also incurring significant economic costs. Oregon has already benefited from several wildlife crossings that have decreased dangerous collisions. For example, Oregon's Highway 97 crossing project has reduced deer-vehicle collisions by over 90%. A 2020 poll commissioned by The Pew Charitable Trusts found that 86% of Oregon voters favor more wildlife crossings, and 75% of voters support increasing state funding to build those crossings. I urge you to include \$5 million per year of dedicated funding in ODOT's budget for the construction of wildlife crossings. This will enable the construction of an additional 20 wildlife fencing and structure projects over the next 30 years, reducing the number of wildlife-vehicle collisions throughout the state. Thank you fo supporting these critical crossings that will protect Oregon's imperiled wildlife.