



Invest in wildlife crossings

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Letter to the Editor by Nancy Hinnen

To the Editor:

As a resident of Black Butte Ranch, I am keenly aware of the risks of driving Highway 20 between Bend and Suttle Lake. This stretch has the highest density of deer and elk-vehicle collisions in Oregon, endangering both people and wildlife. Every year, our state sees over 7,000 wildlife-vehicle collisions, leading to serious injuries and even fatalities. In a room full of BBR friends, I can point in any direction to someone who has been affected by a wildlife-vehicle collision. In the high season, the carcasses of elk and deer trim the edges of Highway 20, a sight both tragic and cautionary.

We don't have to shrug and accept this as the norm. Wildlife crossings — overpasses and underpasses — are proven to improve safety. In Central Oregon, the crossings at Crawford Road and Lava Butte on

Highway 97 south of Bend reduced deer-vehicle collisions by over 90% while supporting safe movement for 31 different species. Investing in crossings isn't just good for wildlife — it's cost-effective, saving millions in accident-related expenses and keeping our roads safer.

If you are in support of these wildlife crossings, please take a few minutes to contact Rep. Levy, Rep. Kropf, and Sen. Broadman and urge them to ensure that this budget includes dedicated funds for wildlife crossings in Oregon.

Nancy Hinnen

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