

Submitter: Hillary Tiefer

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

Dear Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain, Co-Vice Chairs Starr and Boshart Davis, and Members of the Committee,

Please support HB 2025 Sections 111 and 117, which establish the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Wildlife-Vehicle Collision Reduction Fund at an annual rate of \$10 million per biennium.

Driving on the I-5 and other Oregon highways over the years I have felt the pain of dismay seeing road kill, including adult deer and fawns as well as other animals. On Route 26 this weekend my husband had to jam on his brakes to avoid hitting a huge buck. It would have caused injury to us and have killed the deer if he couldn't stop on time. The Bird Alliance of Portland points out that "Wildlife-vehicle collisions also take a costly toll on people. According to ODOT, there are over 7,000 collisions per year resulting in over 500 serious human injuries and four fatalities."

As the Bird Alliance of Portland points out, "Habitat loss and fragmentation are making it harder for wildlife to migrate and disperse to where they need to go to survive. For many species in Oregon, our highways are one of the biggest challenges to their survival. As a case in point, many vulnerable wildlife species are killed in vehicle collisions every year on our roadways. This includes charismatic species like Pacific marten and wolves. It also includes important game species such as the mule deer. In fact mule deer are the most commonly hit animal in Oregon and its population has declined by over 50% in recent years."

Fortunately we already know that wildlife crossings work. A great example is the Lava Butte underpass on HWY 97 in central Oregon, where collisions with deer have been reduced over 90% since its construction.

The Bird Alliance of Portland writes: "HB 2025 Sections 111 and 117 build upon past efforts of the Legislature to address the problem of the loss of wildlife connectivity and the high rate of wildlife-vehicle collisions by establishing and sustainably funding the "Wildlife-Vehicle Collision Reduction Fund." This would be a significant step in addressing the safety and environmental consequences.

Sincerely,
Hillary Tiefer