



To  
Joint Committee on Transportation Reinvestment  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR

Date: 06.11.2025

Sub: **Testimony in support of Sections 111 and 117** (Wildlife Vehicle Collision Reduction Fund) in HB 2025

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

I am Dr Sristi Kamal and I am writing on behalf of my employer, Western Environmental Law Center (WELC), a public interest environmental law firm. Our mission strives to foster a thriving, resilient western lands, waters and wildlife, and communities in the face of a changing climate.

Today, I am submitting this testimony **in support of Sections 111 and 117 of HB 2025** that would make Oregon's roadways safer for drivers and wildlife through sustained funding for ODOT's Wildlife-Vehicle Collision Reduction Program. 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 WVC by establishing and sustainably funding the "Wildlife-Vehicle Collision Reduction Fund." Establishing sustained funding for the Wildlife-Vehicle Collision Reduction Program would be a significant step in addressing the safety and environmental consequences of habitat fragmentation caused by roadways and would position Oregon alongside [Utah](#) as the only state with annual funding for wildlife crossings.

As development and demographic pressures grow in Oregon, the state must balance development with conserving natural resources. This balance includes ensuring there is sufficient habitat connectivity by way of wildlife corridors and safe crossing areas. Wildlife species must be able to move around to find food, water, and shelter, adapt to changing environments and the effects of climate change, and reach breeding or overwintering areas. In Oregon, wildlife-vehicle collisions (WVC) kill threatened [Pacific marten](#), [gray wolves](#), and [mule deer](#) (the most commonly hit animal in the state), which have seen population declines of up to 54% in recent years.

In addition to the loss of an animal and the cost of species recovery, instances of WVC and their financial costs are significant. According to [ODOT](#), there are over 7,000 WVC collisions each year, resulting in over 500 human injuries and four human fatalities, [the highest among West Coast states](#). Unfortunately, the instances of WVC are likely much higher than reported, as multiple studies have shown that nearly three times more collisions are likely to go unreported.

Efforts to reduce instances of WVC and improve connectivity are very successful; [for example](#), in its first year, the Lava Butte wildlife underpass on Hwy 97 in Central Oregon was used by 29 different species, and instances of WVC involving deer were reduced by over 90%. Because of these successes, programs

to improve wildlife connectivity and reduce instances of WVC are widely supported amongst diverse stakeholders and the public – a [2020 poll](#) commissioned by the Pew Charitable Trusts found that 86% of Oregon voters favor constructing more wildlife crossings.

We are grateful that the funding was included in HB 2025 and we urge you to retain this important funding for the safety of Oregonians and for wildlife that call Oregon home.

Thanking you

*Sristi Kamal*

Sristi Kamal, Ph.D.

Deputy Director, Western Environmental Law Center