



Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

June 11, 2025

Re: HB 2025 Section 111 and 117 (Establishing and funding the Wildlife-Vehicle Collision Reduction Fund)

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

This testimony is submitted by the Oregon Wildlife Coalition in support of HB 2025 Sections 111 and 117, which establish and fund Oregon Department of Transportation's (ODOT) Wildlife-Vehicle Collision Reduction Fund at an annual rate of \$5 million per year.<sup>1</sup> Members of the Oregon Wildlife Coalition include Bird Alliance of Oregon, Cascadia Wildlands, Defenders of Wildlife, Humane Voters Oregon, Humane World for Animals, Think Wild, Oregon Wild, and Western Environmental Law Center.

**HB 2025 Sections 111 and 117 would make Oregon's roadways safer for drivers and wildlife alike by sustainably funding ODOT's Wildlife-Vehicle Collision Reduction Program.**

Habitat loss and fragmentation – and the resulting connectivity loss – are one of the main threats to many species' ability to disperse, reproduce, and find food. For many species in Oregon, our highways are one of the biggest challenges to their survival. Climate change impacts are further exacerbating the problem – our changing climate is impacting habitats and changing the availability and seasonality of food sources, which makes it even more important for wildlife to be able to travel to find what they need.

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 "serious" 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.

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<sup>1</sup> The Oregon Wildlife Coalition takes no position as to the revenue mechanism used to generate this funding.

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.

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.

Overall, HB 2025 Sections 111 and 117 would make Oregon a safer place to drive and would improve Oregon’s terrestrial environment. The Oregon Wildlife Coalition commends the Legislature for its attention to these important issues and supports the passage of these critical sections.

***Bird Alliance of Oregon  
Cascadia Wildlands  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Humane Voters Oregon***

***Humane World for Animals  
Think Wild  
Oregon Wild  
Western Environmental Law Center***