

Submitter: Lee Rengert

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

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.

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.

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. This is the highest rate among West Coast states. Millions of dollars of
damage are incurred every year from such collisions. The good news is that we know
that wildlife crossings work. The Lava Butte underpass on HWY 97 in central Oregon
has reduced deer collisions by over 90% since construction.

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 of habitat fragmentation caused by roadways and
would position Oregon alongside Utah as the only state with annual funding for
wildlife crossings.

Please strongly consider this request!

Sincerely,
Lee Rengert