

Submitter: Donna Harris

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain, Vice Chair Starr, Vice Chair Boshart Davis, and members of the Joint Committee on Transportation Reinvestment,

Thank you for your work on the Oregon Transportation Reinvestment Package (HB 2025).

I urge you to pass a transportation package this session that delivers a safe, sustainable transportation system that offers Oregonians many options to get around. HB 2025 is an excellent start.

I appreciate and strongly support the proposed funding for:

Wildlife Crossings. I have been strongly advocating for ways to support more wildlife crossings in Oregon. As a past member / volunteer for Protect Animal Migration which was created in Central Oregon mainly to make the public and agencies (ODOT, ODFW biologists, county Road Dept's,) aware of the need to protect migration corridors for our mule deer, improve connectivity using barrier free migration routes, and especially the need for more wildlife crossings over/ under major barrier highways where deer/ vehicle collisions are high. We teamed with ODOT and ODFW wildlife biologists, and presented information to the public via meetings with neighborhood associations , showed films at schools, science clubs, and other public venues about threats to deer connectivity with their migration from development within the WUI zone, highways, fences, and outdoor recreation. Our chair person was even able to obtain grant funding to help with the purchase of funnel fencing that is the necessary accompaniment to a wildlife crossing. We met with ODOT officials to advocate for the building of new wildlife crossings over Hwy 97 at Chemult, and several south of the already existing ones near Sunriver exit . We had members of the OR Hunters Asso. join our group to also advocate and donate for more crossings and even volunteer to tear down wildlife unfriendly fencing. Yes, wildlife crossings are expensive but studies have shown that they pay for themselves over time with reduced collisions with wildlife , with reduced costs to vehicle insurance (State Farm Insurance has stats on the millions of \$\$\$\$ saved yearly), and reduced death or hospitalization of humans injured in these collisions. But non profits alone cannot donate enough to build more crossings, nor can the "Watch For Wildlife "License Plate bring in necessary funding for crossings . We really need a steady source for these necessary structures. Oregon has fallen behind most Western States who have built dozens of crossings , such as WA, ID, WY, NM, AZ to name several. Please help support our diminished mule deer population which is

below 50% sustainability, where our wildlife biologists state they are decreasing at a rate of 10% a year.

Great Streets program, and

Safe Routes to School program.

These investments improve the safety of our roadways for both motorists and wildlife and boost quality of life for all Oregonians. I also support:

Increased oversight and accountability for ODOT, and

Increased funding from a variety of sources for the operation and maintenance of our existing infrastructure.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and for your work to deliver a safe, equitable, and sustainable transportation future for all.

Sincerely,