



VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL: hnr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

March 11, 2019

House Committee On Natural Resources
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: House Bill 2834 - Wildlife Corridor and Safe Road Crossing Act

Dear Chair Witt and Honorable Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on HB 2834. Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) is an organization of 10,000 members and supporters dedicated to defending, protecting, and restoring Oregon's high desert. ONDA and its members have a long history of monitoring ecological values and advocating for protection of critical wildlife habitat throughout eastern Oregon. ONDA is part of a recently formed collaborative effort focused on "conservation actions that will improve ungulate habitat connectivity, ecosystem structure and function, and human wildlife safety..." in Oregon and the surrounding region. ONDA provides this letter in support of HB2834, the Wildlife Corridor and Safe Road Crossing Act.

Oregon lags behind other states in adopting policy that prioritizes the designation, protection and restoration of wildlife corridors and migration habitat. Designing and adopting a plan to "preserve long-term habitat connectivity for native fish, wildlife and plant species to facilitate migration, dispersal, safe road crossing, genetic exchange and adaptation to climate and other environmental changes" is a key step towards ensuring the native systems in the state of Oregon persist on into the future.

HB2834 would provide a much needed framework for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and partners to work cooperatively on a strategy to identify and protect critical wildlife habitat, increase ecosystem resiliency, and increase public safety. The loss of habitat is a primary reason for the loss of biodiversity. An important issue we face is how to preserve the wildlife habitat that is left. HB2834 is a step towards preventing further loss of biodiversity in Oregon and the associated benefits it provides for current and future generations of Oregonians. ONDA supports HB2834.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeremy Austin".

Jeremy Austin
Hart-Sheldon Coordinator
Oregon Natural Desert Association
50 SW Bond Street, suite 4
Bend, Oregon 97702