

HB 2834 -1, -2 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Natural Resources

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/14, 4/4

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) in consultation with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to develop or collect data regarding the relationship of wildlife habitat areas and connectivity of those areas. Requires Department to use the data to develop a Wildlife Corridor and Safe Road Crossing Action Plan, for use by all state agencies. Requires Plan at a minimum to include: identification of species of highest concern; identification of habitats for high concern species at risk of fragmentation; identification of known migration and dispersal corridors for species of high concern; description of anticipated effect of climate change on species and corridor; identification of human-caused barriers; contemporary map showing existing and potential wildlife corridors and core high quality habitat area; and list of areas where designation as wildlife corridor is high priority based on set of predetermined factors. Requires Department to review Plan once every five years. Requires that prior to final adoption of Plan, Department post proposed plan on Department website and provide opportunity for public comment, and deliver proposed plan to related Senate committee or regular committee. Requires Department to prepare report prior to final adoption of proposed update to Plan. Requires report include change in number of high-priority wildlife corridors designated. Requires ODOT provide information regarding operation of program including: number and types of infrastructure established, use of mitigation plans, and resulting change in wildlife-vehicle collisions. Requires Department post report on Department website and deliver report to Senate interim committee or regular committee. Requires Department conduct review once every five years on statute and rule impacting or potentially impacting development of wildlife corridors. Requires Department to include review of findings in report. Directs all agencies of state government to assist and advise Department in development and updating of Plan. Requires ODOT to develop program to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions in wildlife corridors identified in the Plan. Requires that ODOT program include: plans for creating or modifying road infrastructure that promotes wildlife movement, increases wildlife and public safety, and may include wildlife underpasses and roadway fencing. Requires ODOT incorporate wildlife corridors into design for road projects that threaten wildlife habitat connectivity. Requires that environmental impact study submitted by ODOT include identification of wildlife corridors that might be threatened by project and include mitigation plan.

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact

REVENUE: No revenue impact

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Requires Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) collect, analyze, and develop best available science and data regarding connectivity of wildlife habitat areas. Removes specific language requiring the Wildlife Corridor and Safe Road Crossing Action Plan (Plan) be designed to preserve long-term habitat connectivity. Changes language from species of highest concern to species of concern. Removes requirement that Plan include identification of habitats for species of highest concern. Requires that Plan include a list of areas for land acquisition or other agency actions of high priority areas. Removes population of species, likelihood of climate change impacts, and number of species that could benefit as factors related to identification of high priority areas

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in the Plan. Requires Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) report on status of projects and potential benefits from implemented projects. Requires Department initiate work on Plan no later than January 1, 2020. Requires Department report on findings and recommendations regarding designation and protection of wildlife corridors to an interim committee of the Legislative Assembly no later than September 15, 2022. Requires Oregon Transportation Commission (Commission) adopt a program to reduce vehicle-wildlife collisions in areas where wildlife corridors are identified in the Plan by the Department. Specifies that ODOT incorporate design measures consistent with program for federal, state, or county road projects included in the program. Requires ODOT review grant applications by county road departments for compliance with program and the Plan. Requires Commission adopt program no later than December 31, 2023. Requires ODOT and Department coordinate efforts to reduce vehicle-wildlife collision based on data until Commission adopts program.

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, no statement yet issued

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, no statement yet issued

-2 Replaces measure. Requires ODFW collect, analyze, and develop best available science and data related to wildlife connectivity. Requires ODFW and ODOT use data to develop Wildlife Corridor Action Plan. Requires plan provide guidance for all state agencies an include: identification of species of concern at risk of habitat fragmentation; identification of known migration and dispersal corridors for species of concern; description of potential effects of climate change on species movement; identification of known and potential human-cause barriers; contemporary map showing existing and potential wildlife corridors; and list of areas designated as wildlife corridors, land acquisition or other agency actions of high priority to protect connectivity. Requires ODFW review Plan every five years. Requires ODFW post plan on department website, provide opportunity for public comment, and deliver a copy of the plan to the Senate and House interim or regular committees relating to natural resources prior to final adoption of the Plan. Requires ODFW prepare report on implementation of update including number of high priority wildlife corridors established or planned, post report on department website, and deliver report to Senate and House interim or regular committees related to natural resources prior to final adoption of a proposed update.

Directs all agencies to assist and advise ODFW in development of Plan and in five-year reviews of Plan.

Requires ODFW initiate work on Plan no later than January 1, 2020 and report findings and recommendations to interim or regular Senate and House committees relating to natural resources no later than September 15, 2022.

Requires ODOT establish program to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions in wildlife corridors identified in Plan which intersect with proposed or existing public roads. Requires Program include: plans for creating or modifying road infrastructure to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions and promote public-safety. Requires ODOT, to extent practicable, coordinate with local governments, and tribal governments. Requires ODOT establish program no later than December 31, 2023.

Requires ODOT and ODFW coordinate efforts to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions based on data gathered, until ODOT establishes program. Requires ODOT consider benefit of including wildlife crossing as part of project if data suggests reduction of wildlife-vehicle collisions, until ODOT establishes program. Requires ODOT biennially report on status of program to interim or regular Senate and House committees relating to natural resources. Requires report include information on number and types of wildlife corridor infrastructure projects established or planned and realized or expected effect of wildlife corridor infrastructure projects on number of wildlife-vehicle collisions. Requires ODOT submit first report no later than September 15, 2024.

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FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact

REVENUE: No revenue impact

BACKGROUND:

A wildlife corridor is a path that animals and plants use to travel between habitats. According to the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), in 2018 there were 2,212 vehicle collisions with deer and elk in Oregon during the months of October and November. ODOT maintains a wildlife collisions location database which illustrates where these collisions are concentrated. In 2012, ODOT constructed a wildlife crossing under Highway 97. In 2014, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) reported an 80 percent decrease in deer mortality along the affected stretch of highway. States such as California, New Hampshire, and New Mexico have passed bills requiring or encouraging state agencies to mitigate for vehicle-wildlife collisions and conserve wildlife corridors.

House Bill 2834 would require that ODFW, in consultation with ODOT, collect data regarding wildlife habitat areas and connectivity and develop a Wildlife Corridor and Safe Road Crossing Action Plan.