



**OREGON CHAPTER
OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY**
PO Box 2378
Corvallis, OR 97339

May 14, 2019

FROM: The Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society

TO: Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

SUBJECT: Support for HB 2834-A

Chair Dembrow and members of the committee,

The Oregon Chapter of the Wildlife Society is writing to express our support for HB 2834-A. Wildlife species across the landscape are often isolated by roadways or other transportation infrastructure, and increased knowledge of critical migration corridors and implementation of appropriate mitigation design can help to improve the health of both wildlife populations as well as human safety.

The Wildlife Society is an international organization founded in 1937, representing nearly 10,000 professionals, including scientists, managers, educators, technicians, planners, consultants, conservation officers, students and others who manage, conserve, and study wildlife populations and habitat. In Oregon, the Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society (ORTWS) represents nearly 500 such professionals from many areas of public and private enterprise.

Our mission is to promote wise conservation and management of wildlife resources in Oregon by serving and representing natural resource professionals. A central purpose of ORTWS is to support scientifically sound management policies.

The Oregon Conservation Strategy, developed by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), highlights barriers to animal movement as one of seven key state conservation issues. The indirect result can be fragmentation of fish and wildlife habitat, putting populations at risk and increasing stress on ecosystem services.

ODFW has already implemented the Oregon Connectivity Assessment and Mapping Plan, which will highlight critical migration corridors across the state. The development of the Wildlife Corridor and Safe Road Crossing Action Plan will assist state agencies in implementing wildlife road crossings, which have been proven to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions by up to 97%, as well as connect fragmented habitat for wildlife species. The requirements for Oregon Department of Transportation to develop mitigation designs as part of infrastructure development is critical to reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions while improving wildlife movement across important habitat.

Wildlife connectivity is important for many species, not just the deer and elk that cause the majority of traffic accidents but also for the multitude species large and small that need to disperse or migrate at some time in their lives. These include amphibians such as

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the Oregon spotted frog and mammals such as beaver, martin, and bear. Increasing human pressure, and particularly climate change, is increasing the need for animals to move to new habitats and in so doing maintain habitat resiliency.

This effort will also compliment the directives from the Department of Interior (Secretary Order 3362) to identify and improve big-game migratory corridors, providing the needed scientific background for improving current and designing new transportation infrastructure. SO 3362 directs federal agencies to work with local governments to implement the necessary strategies to improve migratory corridors, and will likely enable the leveraging of the state efforts with federal funds.

On behalf of ORTWS Members and Board, thank you for your time and consideration in this matter and please do not hesitate to contact us with questions or to engage further discussion.

Respectfully,

ORTWS Board of Directors

ORTWS Contacts for HB 2829-A:

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