House Bill 2834
Sponsored by Representative HELM, Senator PROZANSKI, Representative MARSH, Senator DEMBROW

SUMMARY
The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure as introduced.

Requires State Department of Fish and Wildlife, in consultation with Department of Transportation, to develop Wildlife Corridor and Safe Road Crossing Action Plan for use by state agencies. Specifies certain content for inclusion in plan. Requires periodic plan updates. Requires department to post report of proposed plan or of proposed updates on website and deliver report to legislative committee relating to natural resources. Requires department to prepare report regarding operation of program, post report on website and deliver report to legislative committee relating to natural resources. Requires department to periodically review statutes and rules affecting wildlife corridors and to include findings in report of program operation. Requires state agencies to cooperate with department in plan development.

Requires Department of Transportation to develop program for reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions in areas where wildlife corridors intersect with proposed or existing public roads. Requires department to incorporate wildlife corridors into design options for road projects having potential to threaten wildlife habitat connectivity. Requires inclusion of mitigation plan in road project environmental impact statement.

A BILL FOR AN ACT
Relating to wildlife corridors.

Whereas the state of Oregon is home to a rich array of wildlife and landscapes; and
Whereas biodiversity and habitat connectivity play a vital role in Oregon's economy and in ensuring a sustainable future for current and future generations of Oregonians; and
Whereas habitat loss and fragmentation are major contributors to declines in populations of native fish, marine life and terrestrial wildlife; and
Whereas wildlife corridors serve to connect wildlife habitat areas and allow for the movement, migration and dispersal of fish, wildlife and plant species; and
Whereas, in addition to other benefits, wildlife corridors provide ecosystem services such as pollination, air and water purification, carbon sequestration and disturbance prevention; and
Whereas wildlife corridors increase public safety and are highly effective at reducing vehicle-wildlife collisions and the costs associated with those collisions; and
Whereas formally designating and protecting wildlife corridors is a crucial strategy for bolstering Oregon's ecosystem resiliency and for ensuring the long-term viability of wildlife population and communities; now, therefore,

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. (1) The State Department of Fish and Wildlife, in consultation with the Department of Transportation, shall develop or collect data regarding the relationship of wildlife habitat areas and the connectivity of those areas. The State Department of Fish and Wildlife shall use the data to develop a plan, to be known as the Wildlife Corridor and Safe Road Crossing Action Plan, for use by all state agencies. The plan shall be designed to provide guidance for state agency decisions and to develop benchmarks for the designation and protection of wildlife corridors. The department shall design the plan to preserve long-term steadiness of wildlife populations, recovery of endangered species and protection of habitat areas necessary for maintaining the long-term viability of wildlife populations and for ensuring the long-term viability of wildlife populations.
habitat connectivity for native fish, wildlife and plant species to facilitate migration, dis-
persal, safe road crossing, genetic exchange and adaptation to climate and other environ-
mental changes.

(2) The Wildlife Corridor and Safe Road Crossing Action Plan must, at a minimum, in-
clude:

(a) Identification of species that are of highest concern due to rare, declining or vulner-
able populations.

(b) Identification of the habitats for species identified under paragraph (a) of this sub-
section that are at risk of fragmentation.

(c) Identification of the known migration and dispersal corridors for species identified
under paragraph (a) of this subsection, including but not limited to the intersection of mi-
gration and dispersal corridors with public roads.

(d) A description of the anticipated effect of climate change on species and corridors de-
scribed in paragraphs (a) and (c) of this subsection.

(e) Identification of human-caused barriers in Oregon that negatively affect wildlife
habitat connectivity, including but not limited to roads, dams, culverts and commercial or
residential developments.

(f) A contemporary map showing existing and potential wildlife corridors and core high-
quality habitat areas that support wildlife resiliency.

(g) A list of areas for which designation as wildlife corridors is of high priority. The
identification of the high-priority areas shall be developed using ecological criteria and con-
siderations related to the vulnerability of focus species, including but not limited to:

(A) A designation of a species by the federal government or the State Fish and Wildlife
Commission as an endangered species or threatened species;

(B) The relative current population size of species and the likelihood of extermination;

(C) The likelihood that climate change will increase the number or severity of other
negative impacts on the wildlife population;

(D) The number of species that could benefit from providing linkage between the area
and other habitats;

(E) The potential for reducing vehicle-wildlife collisions; and

(F) The feasibility of linkage as indicated by the presence of sufficient adjacent or nearby
protected land and the ability to enact a wildlife corridor design compatible with the ecolog-
ical conditions in the area.

(3) The department shall review and update the Wildlife Corridor and Safe Road Crossing
Action Plan once every five years. Prior to final adoption of the plan or a plan update the
department shall:

(a) Post the proposed plan or update on the department website and provide an opportu-
nity for public comment; and

(b) Deliver a copy of the proposed plan or update to a Senate interim or regular com-
mittee relating to natural resources.

(4) Prior to final adoption of a proposed update, the department shall prepare a report
on the operation of the wildlife corridor program, including but not limited to information
concerning changes in the number of high-priority wildlife corridors designated and in the
percentage of designated high-priority wildlife corridors established. The Department of
Transportation shall provide information regarding the operation of the program described
in section 3 of this 2019 Act, including but not limited to numbers and types of infrastructure
established, the use of mitigation plans and any resulting changes in the number of wildlife-
vehicle collisions in areas where wildlife corridors intersect with public roads. The State
Department of Fish and Wildlife shall post the report on the department website and deliver
the report to a Senate interim or regular committee relating to natural resources.

(5) The department shall conduct a review at least once every five years to identify
statutes and agency rules that impact or potentially impact the development of wildlife cor-
ridors. The department shall include its findings in the report under subsection (4) of this
section, along with any recommendations for proposed legislation to strengthen or lessen the
impacts or potential impacts.

SECTION 2. All agencies of state government, as defined in ORS 174.111, are directed to
assist and advise the State Department of Fish and Wildlife in the development and periodic
updating of the Wildlife Corridor and Safe Road Crossing Action Plan required under section
1 of this 2019 Act.

SECTION 3. (1) The Department of Transportation shall create a program to reduce
wildlife-vehicle collisions in areas where wildlife corridors identified in the Wildlife Corridor
and Safe Road Crossing Action Plan by the State Department of Fish and Wildlife intersect
with proposed or existing public roads. The Department of Transportation program shall in-
clude, but need not be limited to, plans for creating or modifying road infrastructure in a
manner that promotes wildlife migration and dispersal and increases wildlife safety and
public safety, which may include, but need not be limited to, the use of wildlife underpasses
and roadway fencing.

(2) If a road project threatens wildlife habitat connectivity, the Department of Trans-
portation shall incorporate wildlife corridors into the design options for the road project.
The environmental impact study that the department submits for the road project must in-
clude a list of identified wildlife corridors that might be threatened by the proposed road
project. The statement must include a mitigation plan for minimizing the threat to the
wildlife corridors.