

## **Making Oregon Roads Safer for People and Wildlife – Support LC 189 (2022)**

Collisions with wildlife on our roadways have serious consequences for both people and wildlife. By investing in targeted projects that reduce these collisions, LC 189 is a win for motorists, wildlife, and communities across the state.

### ***Public Safety***

[Oregon has the highest likelihood of wildlife crashes among west coast states.](#) In 2019, the state Department of Transportation recorded 6,100 wildlife-vehicle collisions, with [twice that many more collisions likely going unreported.](#) These collisions cause hundreds of injuries to drivers and a number of fatalities each year.



### ***Financial Savings***

With the [annual cost associated with wildlife collisions estimated to exceed \\$8 billion nationally,](#) wildlife crossings are a wise investment. Considering vehicle damage, medical expenses, and lost hunting value in 2021 dollars, the average [cost of a deer collision is \\$9,086 and an elk collision is \\$24,006,](#) and the cumulative cost of collisions with those two species in Oregon totaled \$56.9 million in 2020. The public resource value of an animal to the state can, on its own, be as high as [\\$50,000 per animal for some species.](#)

### ***Ecological Impact***

Vehicle collisions [negatively impact wildlife migration and populations.](#) Nationally, more than a million animals are killed by motorists each year – over two per minute. In Oregon, [vehicle collisions kill threatened Pacific marten,](#) and mule deer (the most commonly hit animal in the state) have seen [population declines up to 54% in recent years.](#) Protecting historic migratory corridors is vital to the health and resilience of wildlife populations in the face of development and a changing climate.

### ***Proven Effectiveness***

Road design elements, such as wildlife underpasses or overpasses, are proven to significantly reduce collisions. In its first year, the Lava Butte wildlife underpass on Hwy 97 in Central Oregon was used by 29 different species and [reduced deer collisions by over 90 percent.](#) A new underpass at Gilchrist is producing similar results.

### ***Timely Opportunities***

With only 5 wildlife crossings, Oregon significantly trails other western states – CO has 69, UT and CA each have 50, and NV has 23 for large mammals alone. However, many opportunities exist, informed by state agency data on hot spots. Some examples include I-5 near Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, I-84 near Meacham, Hwy 140 outside Klamath Falls, Hwy 26 near Dayville, and Burns Paiute Tribe land in Malheur County where Hwy 20 bisects high-density mule deer winter range that has [great cultural significance to the Tribe.](#)

### ***Leveraging Federal Funds***

Congress recently allocated \$350 million to competitive grants through a Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program. Oregon can compete for dedicated federal resources by prioritizing projects and allocating state matching funds.

### ***Broad Support***

There is broad bipartisan support for wildlife crossings from voters in urban, suburban, and rural communities across the state. A 2020 poll found that [86% of Oregon voters favor constructing more wildlife crossings and 75% support increased funding](#) for this purpose.

## **Please support LC 189, an important investment in safer roads for people and wildlife**

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, Oregon Chapter  
Central Oregon LandWatch  
Mule Deer Foundation

Oregon Hunters Association  
Oregon Natural Desert Association  
Oregon Wildlife Foundation

Protect Animal Migration  
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

