



THEODORE ROOSEVELT CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP

To guarantee all Americans quality places to hunt and fish

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Testimony in support of HB 2548: Oregon House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

Inspired by the legacy of Theodore Roosevelt, the mission of the TRCP is to *guarantee all Americans quality places to hunt and fish* by uniting and amplifying our partners' voices to strengthen policy for fish and wildlife habitat and enhance public access to quality hunting and fishing opportunities. We work with 60 organizational partners and 100,000 members nationwide. The TRCP is providing testimony in support HB 2548.

The ability to migrate is essential for wildlife to travel to, and access important seasonal habitats. As more and more people move to Oregon, these important links become increasingly threatened. In the last 50 years, the population in Oregon has more than doubled, from 2 million in 1970 to more than 4.1 million today. An increasing population will require updated infrastructure in the form of highways, interstates, and other transportation needs for the public. Recent advances in GPS-enabled collars allow researchers to determine, at a fine scale, how and where these animals travel between their summer and winter habitats, as well as how barriers such as highways and development can negatively affect their migratory corridors and survival. This relatively new knowledge allows scientists to work together with agencies, politicians, and other stakeholders to ensure that these movement paths remain intact and barrier-free.

As stated in the text, the study resulting from this bill will work in conjunction with and provide a supplement to the Wildlife Corridor Action Plan that is currently being developed after the passage of HB 2834 in 2019. Together, these studies will help to identify the necessary funding to install future wildlife passage infrastructure throughout key locations in Oregon. The Oregon Department of Transportation records an average of 7,000 wildlife-vehicle collisions per year, resulting in 700 human injuries and two fatalities. These crashes caused \$44 million in vehicle damage. Furthermore, since 2000, the number of wildlife vehicle collisions has been increasing while the overall number of crashes has gone down. Infrastructure improvements such as wildlife crossings are proven and cost effective. They keep motorists safe and allow for wildlife to migrate, uninhibited by roads and traffic. In 2012, the first two wildlife crossing structures were installed under Highway 97 in Central Oregon. These crossings have been a huge success. Wildlife-vehicle collisions have been reduced by 85% and more than 40 species use these underpasses to safely move across the landscape.

The TRCP appreciates the hard work of this committee and legislators for their success passing HB 2834 and their efforts to continue this good work through HB 2548. We look forward to working with the Committee and other stakeholders to enhance any opportunities to identify adequate and necessary funding for future wildlife crossings.

Sincerely,

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