

8/29/24

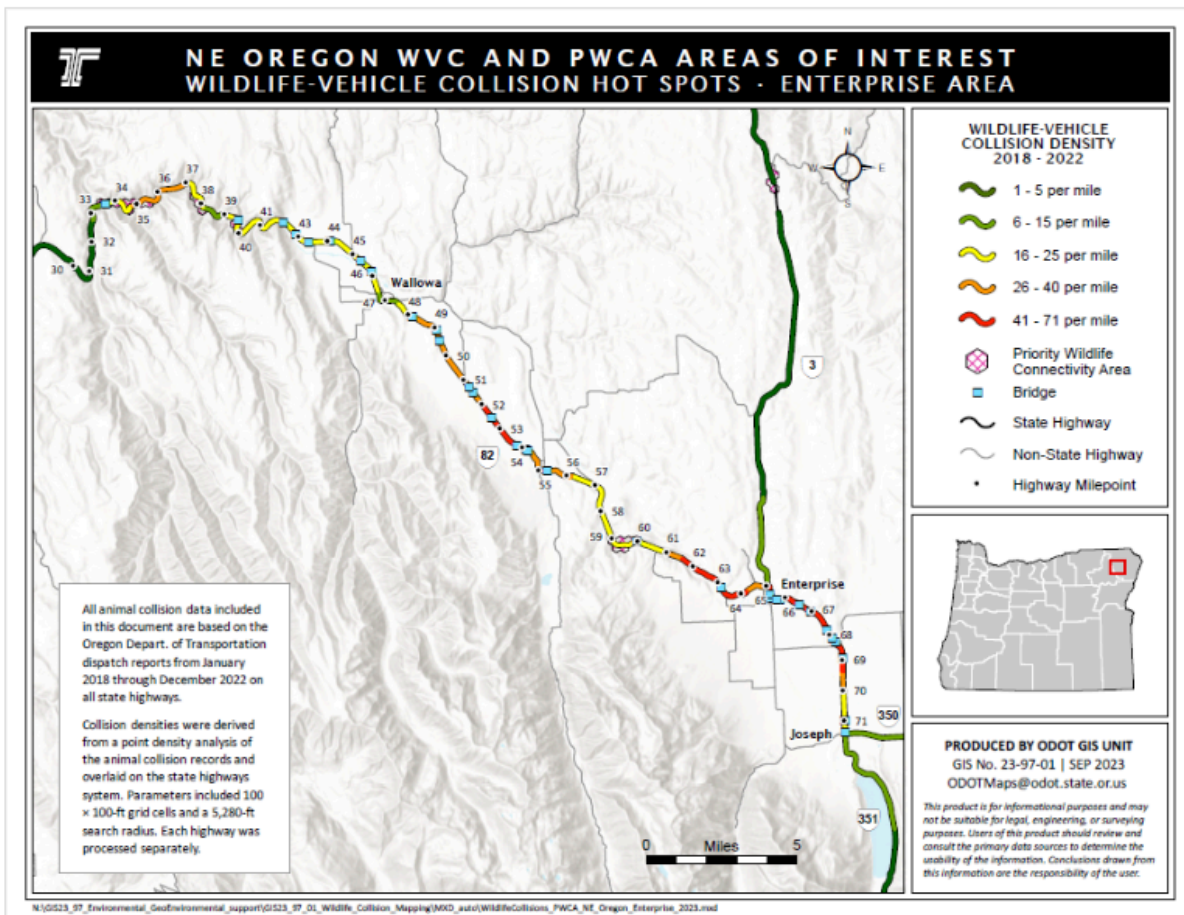
Co-Chairs McLain, Gorsek and Committee Members,

My name is Jamie Dawson and I live in Enterprise, Oregon.

I'm writing to urge the Joint Committee to fund ODOT at the recommended level of \$5 million per year in the 2025 transportation package for wildlife crossing construction. As ODOT states on page 13 of their "Transportation Funding Needs" report, this funding would enable the construction of approximately 20 wildlife fencing and structure projects over the next 30 years.

In Wallowa County, we have a very high rate of wildlife-vehicle collisions along Highway 82, the main route that connects all of our communities to each other and to La Grande, the interstate, and beyond. This is a huge safety risk to drivers, passengers, and wildlife.

From 2009 and 2023, ODOT recorded over 900 wildlife-vehicle collisions just between Wallowa and Enterprise, with several of the most dangerous stretches having 41-71 collisions *per mile*. And since many collisions are not reported, this is likely a fraction of the total overall number of accidents.



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Each collision can result in thousands of dollars in damage to vehicles as well as the potential for injury to passengers and drivers. It's a constant hazard for people and wildlife in our community.

Thankfully, properly sited and fenced wildlife crossings are a proven solution that can reduce wildlife collisions by 90%, and our resident mule deer and elk populations need this help as many are significantly below population objectives. **Northeast Oregon is desperately in need of wildlife crossing infrastructure, but to make that a reality we need ODOT to have long term, dedicated, and sustained funding for wildlife fencing and structure projects.**

Please fund ODOT at the recommended level of \$5 million per year in the 2025 transportation package for wildlife crossing construction.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jamie Dawson
Enterprise, OR