

HB 2999 -2 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/9, 2/21

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Modifies provisions of the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) wildlife-vehicle collision program to include feasibility studies for creating or modifying safer road infrastructure in the context of wildlife-vehicle collisions. Requires ODOT to report biennially to the legislature on feasibility studies, project implementation timelines, and estimated project costs and funding sources of established or planned wildlife corridor infrastructure. Specifies reporting requirements regarding program funding and efforts to secure federal competitive grants. Requires the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to carry out projects to support wildlife mobility and habitat connectivity for certain species in priority corridors. Appropriates \$5 million General Fund moneys to the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund for ODFW project implementation. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-2 Broadens projects required to be carried out by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife related to wildlife mobility and habitat connectivity to be consistent with activities funded by the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund, and not to be limited to strategy species identified in the Oregon Conservation Strategy.

BACKGROUND:

Wildlife corridors are man-made infrastructures managed by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) that provide safe passage for animals forced to navigate ecosystems fragmented by roads. Their intention is to help animal migration during breeding season migration to other feeding grounds and reduce the chances of vehicle-wildlife collisions. The first wildlife corridor in Oregon was built in 2012. In 2019, House Bill 2834 led to the development of a Wildlife Corridor Action Plan under the direction of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). Since then, several other wildlife corridor projects have been completed and research to determine best practices on location selection is ongoing. The Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund was also adopted by the legislature in 2019 through House Bill 2829. It is dedicated to activities that protect, maintain, or enhance fish and wildlife resources throughout Oregon.

House Bill 2999 would modify provisions of the ODOT wildlife-vehicle collision program and reporting requirements and appropriate \$5 million General Fund moneys to the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund for priority ODFW wildlife mobility and habitat connectivity projects.