



OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

Protecting Oregon's Wildlife, Habitat and Hunting Heritage

P.O. Box 1706, Medford, OR 97501 • (541) 772-7313
oha@oregonhunters.org • oregonhunters.org

February 6, 2023

Re: HB 2999 Support

To: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Chair Helm, Vice-chairs Hartman and Owens, Members of the Committee,

Oregon Hunters Association (OHA) is writing today in support of HB 2999. OHA is a 10,000-member conservation/hunting organization active in wildlife, wildlife habitat and hunting heritage since 1983. OHA has long worked with collaborative hunter/conservation groups, agencies and private interests to further wildlife and human safety on Oregon Highways. Since the notable 2012 installation of wildlife undercrossing near Lava Butte proved the effectiveness of safe crossings for over 30 species, statewide understanding of the critical need for safe wildlife crossings, habitat connectivity and wildlife habitat improvement has expanded agency, nonprofit conservation group and public support for legislative actions like HB 2999.

While much of the earlier attention on wildlife crossings was focused on large ungulates, current efforts by numerous organizations and in particular the Oregon Connectivity Assessment and Mapping Project has greatly informed the conservation community on priority multi-species habitat connectivity corridors. HB 2999 will help stabilize our failing mule deer populations as well as expand improvements needed for Oregon Conservation Strategy species; in nearly all situations safe wildlife highway crossing and associated habitat connectivity serves multiple species.

OHA is a charter member of the Oregon Action Team on Ungulate Migration (OAT) working with many conservation partners to expand the collaborative wildlife safe crossing, habitat and habitat connectivity successes statewide. A part of this work has been active support of key recent legislative success with recognition of the scientific and financial needs including HB 2834 (2019,) HB 4130 (2022) and as specifically related to HB 2999.

OHA was a key supporter of HB 2829 (2019) forming the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (OCRF). OHA was awarded a first round OCRF grant for directional fencing at the highway 97 Gilchrist undercrossing and has continued supporting OCRF since its start. HB 2999 will be a key bill in increasing OCRF's funding to conservation grant seeking entities, especially where recreation needs can be melded with effective wildlife support measures.

In closing, HB 2999 represents another major step by Oregonians toward improving statewide wildlife and public safety along with necessary habitat connectivity. OHA strongly supports HB 2999.

Thank you,
Amy Patrick
OHA Policy Director