



Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society
PO Box 2378
Corvallis, OR 97339

February 7, 2023

Honorable Chair Helm and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use,
Natural Resources, and Water

Re: Statement in support of HB 2999

The Oregon Chapter of the Wildlife Society includes over 500 active wildlife professionals in the fields of wildlife biology, research, administration, and education. Much of the research associated with the identification of impacts to wildlife populations by vehicle collisions has been done by members of our organization through their affiliated state, federal, and private organizations.

Collaborative efforts between Oregon State University, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) identified key locations throughout Oregon where the highest numbers of principally deer and elk suffered the greatest mortalities from vehicle collisions. Highway 97 near Sunriver was one of those locations. After the funding was secured from multiple sources, a safe underpass wildlife crossing was constructed reducing the collisions by over 90%.

These collisions not only have high impacts to wildlife populations but motorists have suffered severe injuries and financial losses as well. Using 2022 ODOT wildlife collision data on just deer and elk collisions, estimated costs on Oregon roads was over \$90 million dollars for that year alone. ODFW has identified some of the mule deer populations in central Oregon dropping nearly 50% in less than 20 years.

Now is an excellent time to adopt the proposals in HB 2999 as new federal funds are becoming available through the Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program. The Oregon Chapter of the Wildlife Society is pleased to support and looks forward to your support of this important bill and program.

Sincerely,

Jim Greer
Conservation Chair
Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society