

Submitter: Kyle Collins

On Behalf
Of:

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

Measure: HB2999

Dear Chair Helm, Vice-Chairs Hartman and Owens, and Honorable Members of the
Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2999 and hopefully begin
making strides to reduce wildlife loss throughout our state.

Across Oregon, the combined effects of development, roads, climate change, and
human activity are taking a toll on both wildlife and their habitat.

Research over decades has shown that habitat fragmentation, particularly by high
speed roadways such as Highways 20 and 97 in Central Oregon, is a key factor in
reduced wildlife populations nationally.

Migratory animals such as mule deer need connections between large, intact habitats
to maintain genetic diversity and fulfill lifecycle requirements which have them move
from lower to higher elevations and back again based on seasonal weather cycles.
Unfortunately, these same connections have been interrupted over the past several
decades by increasing population growth into our wildland urban interface areas and
the associated transportation infrastructure to accommodate this growth.

While we should facilitate smart development where appropriate, especially within
already development urban areas, we need to begin considering retrofits to roadways
and other infrastructure statewide or we are very likely to see continued population
declines in many of our iconic wildlife species.

HB 2999 would provide important support to help address wildlife habitat connectivity
and motorist safety concerns across the state by:

Strengthening the Oregon Department of Transportation's program to reduce wildlife-
vehicle collisions and implement mitigation projects.

Allocating \$5 million to support on-the-ground work to reconnect wildlife corridors,
building upon previous investments by the legislature.

Improving Oregon's ability to compete for the unprecedented federal funding
currently available through the IIJA Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program and other federal
grant programs.

For these reasons I strongly support HB 2999 and ask that you pass HB 2999 during
the 2023 legislative session.

Sincerely,

Kyle Collins

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