

Testimony in Support of HB 3362 and HB 2978
Joint Committee on Transportation
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for HB 3362 – A Dedicated Funding Source for Wildlife Crossings and Habitat Connectivity, and HB 2978 – Enhancing Wildlife Connectivity

Chairs Gorsek, McLain, Vice Chairs Starr and Boshart Davis, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Tristan Henry, and I serve as the Oregon Field Representative for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership. I am here today alongside colleagues from partner organizations to express our strong support for HB 3362 and HB 2978—two interlocking bills that together offer a pragmatic, science-based approach to safeguarding Oregon’s wildlife and the public safety of our roadways.

With 25% of the revenue earmarked for the Wildlife-Vehicle Collision Reduction Fund. This dedicated fund would provide a long-term, stable source of financial support for constructing wildlife crossings and installing related fencing that reconnects fragmented habitats. With over 7,000 wildlife-vehicle collisions occurring each year—resulting in more than 500 serious injuries and multiple fatalities—wildlife crossings have proven to reduce collisions by as much as 80–90%. For example, the Highway 97 wildlife underpass in Oregon has achieved reductions exceeding 90% in deer-vehicle collisions.

In addition, a portion of the revenue from HB 3362 will address tire pollution by funding projects to mitigate the environmental impacts of toxic compounds (such as 6PPD-quinone) that leach from worn tires. This dual-purpose tax not only enhances roadway safety and wildlife connectivity but also protects aquatic ecosystems essential to our fisheries.

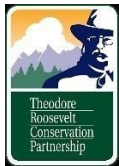
Complementing HB 3362, HB 2978 mandates that the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) collaborate to identify and mitigate risks in key wildlife corridors. By upgrading roadway design standards and prioritizing the construction of wildlife crossings, HB 2978 ensures that migratory species—such as elk, deer, and pronghorn—can move safely between their seasonal ranges. This enhanced connectivity is critical not only to maintain healthy, genetically diverse wildlife populations but also to support the outdoor recreation economy that sustains our rural communities.

Together, these bills address both the funding shortfall and the pressing need for improved wildlife connectivity. While hunters and anglers have long contributed to conservation through license fees and voluntary donations, these funds alone are insufficient to meet today's challenges. By providing a dedicated, broad-based funding mechanism, HB 3362 ensures that all Oregonians—residents and visitors alike—share in the responsibility of preserving our natural heritage.

Moreover, leveraging state funds to match federal dollars (through programs such as Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson) further amplifies our capacity to invest in wildlife crossings and habitat restoration. This comprehensive approach protects human life, reduces the economic burdens of collisions, and preserves the scenic, connected landscapes that define Oregon's outdoor legacy.

In conclusion, we urge you to support HB 3362 and HB 2978. These measures are not only cost-effective and grounded in robust science but also essential for ensuring that Oregon continues to lead in responsible conservation and public safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I welcome any questions you may have.



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