



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Oregon Senate Democrats Vote to Enable Safe Travel for People and Wildlife

House Bill 2978 will help prevent collisions between vehicles and animals on the move

SALEM, OR – Oregon had more than 4,800 crashes between vehicles and wildlife in 2022, collisions that overpasses and underpasses for animals can help prevent. A bill passed in the Oregon Senate today improves the state’s program for setting up wildlife crossings.

“This measure is a careful and necessary step to improve both public safety and wildlife conservation along Oregon’s roadways,” said **Senator Chris Gorsek (D - Gresham)**, co-chair of the Joint Committee on Transportation. “Broad support for this bill shows the shared interest across Oregon in protecting migration corridors, maintaining habitat connectivity, and improving public safety.”

House Bill 2978 builds on the state’s existing wildlife-vehicle collision program, an initiative that has demonstrated effectiveness with infrastructure like the underpass built along Highway 97 near Lava Butte. It has permitted safe crossing for more than 30 species, protecting the ecosystem and reducing highway costs associated with collisions.

Specifically, the measure passed today:

- Creates an advisory group of representatives from local governments, professionals in biology and engineering, and nonprofit leaders to help identify, coordinate, and conduct outreach on wildlife-crossing projects
- Makes the promotion of public safety an explicit goal of the program
- Directs the Department of Transportation and the Department of Fish and Wildlife to work jointly in identifying the highest priority areas to support wildlife mobility

Eight Republicans joined Senate Democrats in supporting House Bill 2978. It passed 24 to 3 and now heads to the Governor’s desk for her signature.

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