

HB 2834 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Sen. Prozanski

Senate Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Action Date: 05/21/19
Action: Do pass the A-Eng bill.
Vote: 4-0-1-0
Yeas: 4 - Bentz, Dembrow, Prozanski, Roblan
Exc: 1 - Olsen
Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact
Revenue: No revenue impact
Prepared By: Beth Patrino, LPRO Analyst
Meeting Dates: 5/14, 5/21

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to collect, analyze, and develop best available science and data related to the connectivity of wildlife habitat areas. Requires ODFW, in cooperation with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), to use the data to develop a Wildlife Corridor Action Plan (plan) to achieve long-term habitat connectivity for wildlife. Establishes plan elements, including, at a minimum: identification of species of concern at risk of habitat fragmentation; identification of known migration and dispersal corridors for species of concern; description of potential effects of climate change on species movement; identification of known and potential human-caused barriers; contemporary map showing existing and potential wildlife corridors; and list of areas designated as wildlife corridors, land acquisition, or other agency actions of high priority to protect connectivity. Requires ODFW review and update plan every five years. Prior to final plan adoption, requires ODFW post plan on its website, provide opportunity for public comment, and deliver a copy of the plan to the Senate and House interim or regular committees relating to natural resources. Requires ODFW prepare report on implementation of update including number of high priority wildlife corridors established or planned, post report on its website, and deliver report to Senate and House interim or regular committees related to natural resources prior to final adoption of a proposed update. Directs all agencies to assist and advise ODFW in plan development and in five-year plan review. Requires ODFW initiate work on plan no later than January 1, 2020 and report findings and recommendations to interim or regular Senate and House committees relating to natural resources no later than September 15, 2022. Requires ODOT establish program to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions in areas where wildlife corridors identified in plan intersect with proposed or existing public roads. Requires program include plans for creating or modifying road infrastructure to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions and promote public safety. Requires ODOT, to extent practicable, coordinate with local governments, and tribal governments. Requires ODOT establish program no later than December 31, 2023. Until ODOT establishes program, requires ODOT and ODFW coordinate efforts to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions based on data gathered and consider benefit of including wildlife crossing as part of project if data suggests reduction of wildlife-vehicle collisions. Requires ODOT biennially report on program status to interim or regular Senate and House committees relating to natural resources. Requires report include information on number and types of wildlife corridor infrastructure projects established or planned and realized or expected effect of wildlife corridor infrastructure projects on number of wildlife-vehicle collisions. Requires ODOT submit first report no later than September 15, 2024.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Wildlife/vehicle collisions
- Role of wildlife corridors
- Allowable uses of Highway Fund
- Public safety

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EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

A wildlife corridor is a path that animals and plants use to travel between habitats. According to the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), in 2018 there were 2,212 vehicle collisions with deer and elk in Oregon during the months of October and November. ODOT maintains a wildlife collisions location database which illustrates where these collisions are concentrated. In 2012, ODOT constructed a wildlife crossing under Highway 97. In 2014, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) reported an 80 percent decrease in deer mortality along the affected stretch of highway. States such as California, New Hampshire, and New Mexico have passed bills requiring or encouraging state agencies to mitigate for vehicle-wildlife collisions and conserve wildlife corridors.

House Bill 2834 A would require that ODFW, in consultation with ODOT, collect data regarding the connectivity of wildlife habitat areas and develop a Wildlife Corridor Action Plan.