

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: Wildlife Protections and Highway Crossings, HB 1129

Position: SUPPORT

Hearing: February 28, 2024

I am writing in support of the Wildlife Protections and Highway Crossings Act. For 12 years I had a job that required me to travel for 100 days a year. For about half of those days, I traveled by car on highways. As an animal lover, I dreaded the prospect of a collision with an animal. Male deer that were in search of mates in the fall were of particular concern.

Our roads and highways divide habitats and force wildlife to make dangerous crossings, harming rare species and causing dangerous and costly deer-vehicle collisions. The average insurance claim for a deer-vehicle collision is \$6,300, and there are an estimated 30,000 – 35,000 collisions per year in Maryland, with an estimated cost of \$180-200 million for the insurance claims alone. Wildlife crossings or wildlife collision mitigation projects reduce collisions and relieve drivers of the stress and expense of repairing a vehicle.

As a Maryland Master Naturalist, I also appreciate the role wildlife crossings will play in connecting habitats of rare, threatened, and endangered species such as the tiger salamander, wood turtle, spotted turtle, and the iconic diamondback terrapin.

For these reasons, I am asking you to support HB HB 1129.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lani Hummel

Annapolis Roads