

Dear Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

I urge you to support SB0902, Wildlife - Protections and Highway Crossings. Our modern road infrastructure has made it very difficult if not impossible for animals to move and migrate in ways that are critical to their survival, and this bill would be a positive step toward repairing the damage.

The focus on connecting habitats of threatened and endangered species and those of greatest conservation need is important. Scientists from around the world, in a UN report called Making Peace with Nature, state that human well-being is critically dependent on Earth's natural systems, including its biodiversity, yet human development degrades its finite capacity to sustain human well-being. We see evidence of it here, with over 500 different animals on the rare, threatened and endangered species list, just in MD.

The intercounty connector, between I-270 and I-95 is a great example of design that facilitates wildlife passage and protects vehicles from animal collisions. Its bottomless arches allow fish and aquatic animals to travel in and along streams and also allow for the passage of deer, raccoons, opossums, squirrels, turtles, foxes and horses. Bridges that span the 100-yr flood plain, not only protect people from the effects of storms, but also protect important habitat.

An additional \$10 fee for car insurance to create the Highway Crossings fund is more than reasonable to protect our declining wildlife.

The inclusion of bicycle and walking paths in the definition of highway is also important, because many wild plants and animals benefit from habitats free from major human disturbance.

Please vote in favor of SB0902.

Sincerely,
Diana Colangelo
North Bethesda
20852