

Wildlife Protections and Highway Crossings (HB1129) Testimony

Maryland's [Wildlife-Protections and Highway Crossings](#) bill is a major step forward, in terms of reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions and relieving drivers of the stress and expense of vehicle repair. The inter-county connector, between I-270 and I-95 is a great example of design that facilitates wildlife passage and protects drivers from animal collisions. Love the bottomless arches!

Both Virginia and Pennsylvania have already passed legislation to protect wildlife habitat and reduce collisions. Virginia legislation passed in 2020. Last year, Pennsylvania passed legislation and has received at least [\\$840,000 in federal grant money](#). There is a lot of other federal grant money out there. I will also gladly pay an additional 10 dollars in car insurance toward a Highway Crossings Fund.

One species that will benefit from this bill are turtles and the State Wildlife Action Plan identifies the Wood Turtle, as a species of greatest conservation need. There are over 1200 rare, threatened and endangered species in Maryland-- more than 500 of them animals.

There is a larger picture here. Human well-being is critically dependent on Earth's natural systems, including its biodiversity. However, human encroachment into natural areas has reduced and fragmented habitat, not only causing a decline in both plant and animal species globally, but those left in habitat fragments suffer from inbreeding. I invite you to read a UN report called [Making Peace with Nature](#) to learn more.

Finally, I invite you and/or your staff to read a [white paper on the subject of wildlife corridors](#) that I researched and wrote.