



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

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February 27, 2024

To: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chair, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Wildlife – Protections and Highway Crossings– SB 902 – Support

Chair Feldman, Vice - Chair Kagan, members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Lisa Radov. I am the President and Chair of Maryland Votes for Animals. We champion humane legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. Speaking for Maryland Votes for Animals, our Board of Directors, and our members across Maryland, I respectfully request that the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee vote favorably for Wildlife – Protections and Highway Crossings – SB 902.

This bill requires the Department of Natural Resources, in collaboration with the State Highway Administration, to identify and prioritize certain species whose habitat or movement corridors intersect with State highways and develop tools, technology, and techniques to identify certain State highway infrastructure locations. It requires the Department of Natural Resources to take certain actions regarding a statewide deer population survey on or before November 1, 2024 and June 30, 2026, and to collaborate with automobile insurance providers to remit a fee to the Fund.

Vehicle collisions with wildlife on the nation's roads claim the lives of millions of animals and kill or injure tens of thousands of people each year. According to the Pew Charitable Trust, a wildlife crossing along State Highway 9 in Colorado reduced such collisions by 90% from 2015 to 2020. In Oregon, a wildlife crossing on U.S. 97 near Lava Butte decreased collisions by roughly 85% during a 2015-17 monitoring period.

Animals are moving and shifting their migration patterns as they adapt to climate change. Research and technology have made it possible to target the best places for wildlife crossings so that they can most effectively benefit wildlife and motorists. It is time for Maryland to utilize these existing tools to coordinate efforts between the Maryland State Highway Administration and the Department of Natural Resources to protect Maryland's wildlife and drivers.

Maryland's wildlife and motorists are depending on us!

In closing, I would like to thank Senator Lewis Young for her sponsorship of SB 902 and ask the committee for a favorable report.