

March 29, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation
Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
The Honorable Regina T. Boyce

Vice Chair, Environment and Transportation
Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Korman and Vice Chair Boyce,

I stand with my friend, Senator Karen Lewis Young, and would like to express my support for *Senate Bill 902 - Wildlife – Protections and Highway Crossings*.

While hard estimates are extremely difficult to calculate, in Maryland, approximately 33,000 animal-vehicle collisions (AVCs) occur every year. The human cost of these collisions results in about 200 preventable deaths a year, \$198 million of insurance claims, and \$8.5 million in State costs to respond, investigate, and clean up the thousands of AVCs that occur annually. There are also immeasurable human costs associated with the long-lasting emotional and physical effects of dealing with the aftermath of an AVC, especially when a fatality occurs.

SB902 addresses the high rate of animal-vehicle collisions (AVC) in Maryland by increasing safety for people and wildlife alike. Specifically, this bill 1) compels the State Department of Transportation and the Department of Natural Resources to work together and identify optimal locations for the integration of wildlife passage components into new and maintenance transportation projects, 2) permits the State Highway Administration (SHA) to coordinate with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to apply for relevant federal funding opportunities for highway crossings, and 3) creates a voluntary Wildlife Highway Crossing Fund to support wildlife crossing.

Please be aware that the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 (IIJA) authorized \$350 million in total funding for Federal Fiscal Years 2022 through 2026 to the Federal Highway Administration's Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program (WCPP). This is a competitive federal grant program, which has the goal of "*reducing Wildlife Vehicle Collisions (WVCs) while improving habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species.*" As the federal representative for Maryland's Sixth

Congressional District, and a member of the US House of Representatives Appropriations Committee, I stand by ready to assist SHA and DNR, should they choose to apply for this available funding.

I urge you to give the highest consideration to *Senate Bill 902 - Wildlife – Protections and Highway Crossings*.

Thank you for your time and attention to this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Trone". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

David Trone
Member of Congress