



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

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March 4, 2025

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 635 – 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 Chairman of Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc. 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 the State of Maryland, I respectfully ask that the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to support Wildlife- Protections and Highway Crossings – SB 635.

SB 635 Establishes the Wildlife Connectivity Fund: Lays the groundwork for efforts to design and build wildlife crossings, map habitats, and reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions. The Fund can receive money from gifts, donations, grants, and, when available, state budget appropriations.

Leverages Federal Funding: Aligns state efforts with federal programs to secure funding and maximize state investment impact.

Promotes Sustainable Growth: Requires counties and municipalities to consider wildlife movement and habitat connectivity when developing comprehensive land use plans and provides them with up-to-date information on state connectivity plans.

Ensures Effective Outcomes: Requires performance metrics and measurable outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of wildlife crossing infrastructure.

Enhances Public Awareness: Prioritizes education and outreach about wildlife collisions and the importance of habitat connectivity.

In Maryland, nearly 33,000 deer- vehicle collisions occur annually. 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. The Wildlife Connectivity and Crossings Act creates a mechanism to coordinate efforts between the Maryland State Highway Administration, the Department of Natural Resources, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders 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 635 and ask the committee for a favorable report.