

**Testimony in support of SB0635**  
**Wildlife - Protections and Highway Crossings**  
**Wildlife Connectivity and Crossings Act**

*Submitted by:*

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How do we feel when we hit a deer or crush a turtle trying to cross a road— vexed, regretful? These incidents occur where roads intersect wildlife movement corridors that existed before the road was built. In the case of turtles and other amphibians, their territories are fragmented by the road, which separates them from their breeding grounds. This year, Maryland secured a \$387,000 federal grant to identify priority locations for wildlife crossings over and under roads and create a statewide plan. Pennsylvania and Virginia have already received this grant.

But we need legislation to align state efforts with federal programs. The **Wildlife Connectivity and Crossings Act (SB0635)** establishes a state-level funding mechanism to match and supplement further federal investments. The Act formalizes cooperation between the State Highway Administration and the Dept of Natural Resources to lay the groundwork for designing and building wildlife crossings, mapping habitats, and reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions. The MD Connectivity Coalition supports this effort.

Maryland's population is expected to increase by 16%, or about 1 million people by 2050, resulting in a loss of about 6% of the total land area. Growing development pressure and increasing traffic creates an urgent need to design safer roads and address road-induced habitat fragmentation. Wildlife crossings are an effective, science-backed way to protect both people and animals. Well-placed wildlife crossings pay for themselves quickly through reduced collision costs. Please vote in favor of it.

*P.S. I have researched and written a white paper about the need for wildlife corridors and crossings in Maryland that can be accessed [here](#).*