



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

March 4, 2025

BILL NUMBER: **Senate Bill 635 - First Reader**

SHORT TITLE: **Wildlife - Protections and Highway Crossings**

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT'S POSITION

This bill would formalize work being coordinated under what's been known as a wildlife crossing coalition. As currently written the bill requires the Coalition to meet quarterly regarding the various tasks outlined in the bill. Given the current fiscal uncertainty the Department would respectfully request consideration be given to language that would account for this so that the Coalition would meet and implement actions when practicable, provided there is funding to support such actions. The Department is supportive and appreciative of the sponsors' amendments that name the Maryland Department of Transportation as Chair of the Maryland Connectivity Coalition established in this bill, as well as language that allows cancellation of meetings should there be no agenda to discuss.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Wildlife collisions with automobiles - particularly deer collisions - can have serious consequences for Maryland drivers and passengers. This bill proposes to use engineering solutions to solve these issues. It also seeks to provide funding for road crossing structures for rare animal species.

BILL EXPLANATION

This bill prescribes numerous activities related to investigating and addressing places where there is contact between Wildlife and State highways. It establishes a fund for this work. It establishes and prescribes the conduct of a committee to oversee this work and a fund source. It establishes a requirement that highway interaction with Wildlife be incorporated into county comprehensive plans.

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